

Agenda Item 2

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION COUNCIL HELD ON 28 July 2022

ITEM 9 – PROPOSAL OF A NOTICE OF MOTION (RULE OF PROCEDURE 16)

STATEMENT from Mr Paul Thorpe and Ms Deborah Wright, Grindleford Local Resident

To The Leader of the Council,

We would like to whole heartedly support Councillor Peter O'Brien's motion as tabled above regarding the totally unacceptable noise nuisance from Grindleford station sidings by Network Rail at unsociable hours. The noises are sudden loud clunking sounds, presumably rails being dropped, which wake us up in the middle of the night, and loud reversing alarms which continue to keep us awake.

We have complained to Network Rail on numerous occasions to no effect.

We have also complained on numerous occasions to the Environmental health department and our MP.

Whilst we appreciate that Network Rail has to maintain the rail line, we do not accept that they have to make a terrible noise in the middle of the night at Grindleford station sidings for work that is being done up and down the Hope Valley line, not at Grindleford.

We would like to stress to the Leader of the Council that both the anticipation of the noise and the noise itself at unsociable hours is having a direct negative impact on the physical and mental health of the both of us.

STATEMENT from Mr Steve Burton, Upper Padley Local Resident

It is matter of record that Network Rail has never carried out a formal consultation with all the residents who have been impacted by the expansion, development and change of use of the Grindleford railway siding. I strongly support the motion and hope that it meets with the council's approval. However, if the council is unable to approve the motion then would the council be prepared to support and fund an independent consultation exercise that could provide a clearer understanding of the issues and make recommendations that might lead to more amicable arrangements between Network Rail and local residents.

STATEMENT from Mr and Mrs Slingsby, Upper Padley Local Residents

Dear Councillors,

With reference to Councillor Peter O'Brien's motion regarding Grindleford Station Railway Sidings.

As residents of Upper Padley for 36 years we have seen a steady increase Year on Year to the usage of the Sidings. Resulting in more noise, light pollution and impact on the local area.

We fully endorse Councillor Peter O'Briens proposed motion to request that Network Rail reduce their use of Grindleford Sidings to a minimum. i.e. The maintenance of Totley Tunnel and Emergencies only.

STATEMENT from Tony and Gillie Jenkinson, Grindleford Local Residents

We are writing as residents of Nether Padley, Grindleford, to give our strong support to Councillor Peter O'Brien's motion concerning Network Rail activities near Grindleford Station.

We are often disturbed on weekend nights by the noise of heavy machinery and of metal crashing. Continual sleep disturbances and related anxiety can be harmful to both physical and mental health.

It is intolerable that Network Rail can use a legal loophole to continue to cause this serious disturbance in a residential area.

It is clear that determined action is needed to force them to move these operations to a non-residential area, and we urge the Council to take all necessary steps to bring this about.

STATEMENT from Mr John Davies, Grindleford Local Resident

When we moved to Midland Cottages 36 years ago there were two coal merchants operating from the disused railway sidings (we still call it 'the coal yard'). When they ceased using the site it became unoccupied (apart from a couple of incursions by groups of 'travellers'). It was a 'dark space' at night and a range of wildlife could be seen and heard there - this is no longer the case.

The juxtaposition of the National Trust posters on Grindleford Station platform inviting visitors to enjoy "A breath of fresh air" and "Peaceful Views" with pictures of scenery and wildlife, and the industrial landscape Network Rail have created right next to the platform could not be more striking.

In recent years the site has become a major hub for multiple rail projects to the point where we now expect some kind of disruption on a daily basis - and increasingly overnight. The level of noise and light pollution, along with the added air pollution that comes from the hundreds of visiting rail related vehicles is, for the many residents living within 50 yards of the site (and others living within earshot), unacceptable and completely out of keeping with the setting - a Conservation Area within the Peak District National Park and adjacent to two National Trust areas.

Fleets of 40 foot articulated low loaders come and go bringing huge JCB type machines, other heavy equipment and tons of rail ballast to the site and then uploaded for use on the rail line. 30 foot sections of old rail that are brought back to the site from rail replacement operations are (literally) dropped to the ground (usually at night) and then uploaded to large lorries to be taken away - each time creating extremely loud crashing and banging.

The result of this constant disruption has been that we are often unable to sleep or enjoy the sort of peace and quiet in our gardens that you'd expect in this location. As a result a number of residents are suffering from anxiety or depression. We are frustrated that 5+ years of complaints to and discussions with Network Rail and involvement of our Environmental Health teams have led to no improvement in the situation - in fact it has got more intense with our complaints falling on deaf ears. Indeed, Network Rail are now saying to us that they have done all they can to mitigate the disruption (as far as we are concerned they have put up one sign that most workmen ignore) and they will no longer respond to our complaints !

Recent projects in the Bamford and Dore areas to improve the flow of rail traffic have (we think) led Network Rail and their contractors to set up new access points for delivering those projects. We feel Network Rail should be pressed to make more use of those access points in future and limit use of Grindleford to emergency access and basic maintenance of the nearby track and tunnel.

STATEMENT from Ms Gillian Hutchinson, Upper Padley Local Resident

We write as local residents of Upper Padley living immediately adjacent to the railway line and sidings since 2007. We wish to comment on both parts of this agenda item.

1a. While we accept that live right next to a railway line and that from time to time the sidings will be used for work on the tracks, we seem to have become a base for both for extensive operations that run not only at weekends and also a dump for stored equipment (usually bright yellow) and materiel. As I write (Wednesday morning) I can hear a lorry, lifting equipment and the clatter of loading and unloading heaving equipment.(This may go on for several hours.) This is not unusual, but weekend after weekend and at night this is very wearing due to the on-going loss of sleep such disturbance causes (several nights a week, week after week). We regularly get letters from Network Rail about disruptions on Saturday nights (often after the run of work has started), however, this disruption is not just restricted to these nights i.e., deliveries and loading seem to take place through the week (last time at 5 AM).

As a regular railway user I have observed other track side open land (sidings?) near other stations on the Sheffield to Manchester line e.g., at Totley, Bamford, Hope and Edale. It would not seem unreasonable to spread the burden of noise and stored equipment / materiel across these sites (with smaller impact) and to therefore to reduce the use of Grindleford apparently as a base for work all along the railway line. The impact in terms of noise and visually is worse in winter without the leaf cover of trees around the sidings, but hiding the houses this way also seems to be part of the problem, as we are hidden from the workers on the site - see comments below.

2b. Network Rail 'own' the site but seem unable to effectively manage operations on the sidings at Grindleford. The issue seems to be that numerous contractors use the site and the impact on local residents is down to how they conduct themselves. There seems to be no oversight / practical management by Network Rail. Why does Network Rail not make 'random checks'? In the past we have asked for practical

steps to be taken to help use such as parking vans at right angles to the houses (parallel to the tracks and turning headlights off promptly). This does not always happen illuminating the back of my house for long periods for example, but has got better. The same applies to the lighting on the containers and cabins used by contractors. This needs to point down and away from the housing and does not need to be on all night / all week. Track side workers do not seem to know or care there are local resident close by trying to sleep. If they did, why do they shout to one another at 4:30 AM? Is there no briefing for all jobs informing workers that people live nearby? The big sign apparently about this at the gate to the site clearly is ignored by some.

As a practical step, a significant improvement could be made to the noise impact of operations if contractors were not permitted to power the site using a diesel / petrol generator, but were required to hook up to mains electricity. This has previously been suggested. There must be a power line close to the sidings given there is a lit platform at one end and a signal box at the other. Caravan sites seem to be able to provide and meter power hook ups, so why not here? However, this would require Network Rail to 'improve' the site by setting this up and making it available (and metering it) job by job. I assume its easier to let each contractor haul in power and fuel as part of the cost of the work. This may be simpler, but would be a way to reduce the impact of work at the site and an investment for years to come which would show some commitment to taking this issue seriously. Can this suggestion be explored?

A further practical step to reduced the visual impact of work at Grindleford would be better site management to ensure that equipment and 'left over' materiel is not left to on site for long periods after each job or allowed to accumulate longer term as an eyesore, not only for local resident but also for visitors to the areas as the sidings are visible from the Station Road which is a popular access point for Padley Gorge and Woods.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and suggestion.

ITEM 13 – GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS – PROVISION OF TEMPORARY SITES

STATEMENT from Ms Kerry Andrews, Level Centre

I'm writing from Level Centre on Old Station Close in Rowsley to object to the proposed use of Old Station Close car park and land as a traveller site.

This proposal could have a significant impact on our business and people wanting to attend and visit LEVEL.

LEVEL was established to provide contemporary art experiences for Learning Disabled and Disabled members of our community. We have a year-round programme of events that are open to the public.

Although the building was RIBA award-winning, car parking is limited with only three parking spaces, two of which are for disabled parking. This does not provide sufficient parking for our staff, participants and visitors and Old Station Close car park is used as an overflow.

Much of Station Close is un-surfaced, with traffic to and from the other businesses. Our building occupies the full footprint of the land that it was built on, therefore we use Old Station Close car park as our fire assembly point for our team and vulnerable users. We are unable to change the location of our fire assembly point as much of Station Close is un-surfaced, with traffic to and from the other businesses and would not be safe for our users.

The trees have grown up around the LEVEL building on DDDC land, so the building is no longer visible from the A6. This makes signposting visitors to the centre already difficult, but combined with the potential loss of parking it would make it very difficult for us to not only open to the public but to operate at all.

STATEMENT from Ms Isobel McCormick, Chair of Chesterfield and Northeast Derbyshire Ramblers

I am writing to represent the views of Chesterfield and Northeast Derbyshire Ramblers, especially those who live in the Derbyshire Dales, regarding the possible use of the Old Station Road car park in Rowsley as a temporary site for Travellers and Gypsies. We understand that the council has a duty to provide accommodation for the homeless Traveller families but we would like to express our concern that the use of this site would result in the loss of use of a car park which we frequently utilise as a starting point for our walks. Our walks attract up to thirty people and this means we require a lot of parking spaces not readily available elsewhere in Rowsley. When the car park was occupied by Travellers previously, we used part of the Peak Village carpark near the auction rooms but this is not always available and our Walks Programme is organised several months in advance. This makes unexpected closures difficult for us. We feel it is important that the council encourage walking as it improves mental and physical health.

Thank you for taking account of our views

STATEMENT from Ms Sarah Porter, Northwood and Tinkersley Parish Council

On behalf of Northwood and Tinkersley Parish Council I am writing to object to the inclusion of the recreation ground on Northwood Lane as a potential temporary traveller site. The access options to this site are both down a narrow poorly surfaced track within a high residential area. The recreation ground has just had repairs to a pipe that runs across the flattest part of the site and so vehicles should not go on this area in case the pipe is damaged again, it is also a wet part of the site. The recreation ground is well used by the community and losing this space will have a detrimental effect on the well being of the parish. The top of the recreation ground is a wildflower area and supported by the DDDC green team as one of their flagship areas. The whole site is grass and so unsuitable for caravans going into the winter. The Parish Council urges the District Council to remove this site from the list.

The site near Peak Rail may well be a better option but could have a detrimental effect on Peak Rail and other local businesses.

STATEMENT from Ms Sarah Porter, Baslow and Bubnell Parish Council

On behalf of Baslow and Bubnell Parish Council I am writing to object to the inclusion of the Baslow car park as a potential temporary traveller site. Baslow is one of the key gateways to the Peak District and leads to Chatsworth. Parking is already an issue in the village, particularly during holidays and weekends, and so reducing the available car parking spaces will cause a huge impact on the rest of the village. The Parish Council has recently undertaken consultation to look at this and can provide data to show this. The impact on a loss of parking to the village will be felt by the local businesses still trying to recover from the lockdowns of Covid. The Parish Council urges the District Council to remove this site from the list.

STATEMENT from Ms Laura Newbould, Bakewell Local Resident

Dear Councillors

I am writing to you all with regard the meeting you will be possibly attending on Thursday 28th July 2022.

Where I believe it will be discussed from looking on the agenda the siting of temporary travellers camps on DDDC land.

I live with my father and my two young children in the house directly behind the ABC in bakewell and adjacent to the showground land which the council lease and which has recently endured stays by said travellers. I wish to raise our concerns for those families and indeed any travellers to be located there.

This land is within the Peak District National Park and as such should **NOT** have any type of travelling camp within it (temporary or otherwise) Not only does it fall within the National park but Bakewell being a very profitable tourist location suffers heavily from having these sites located on its land, not only does the council lose revenue from parking but also the loss of much loved community events which would normally be held on the showground land, have recently had to be postponed or even cancelled. As lifelong resident of this town, I believe that siting travellers here would be to the detriment of both council revenues and to all the residents who live here. Not only that but the destruction and mess they leave behind once they move on is disgusting and dangerous.

I wrote to you all last year when the travellers were camped on the land adjacent to us, and I told you about the verbal abuse and threats my father had received from members of the travelling community which had led to him struggling with mental health, I also told you about the constant shouting and swearing we heard and how my children were scared to be in the garden alone, and also the verbal abuse tourists faced when walking into the centre of Bakewell from the Monsal trail, a much loved and very well used footpath which runs straight past the locations on your appendix sheet. One morning my 10 year old daughter, opened her curtains to one of the members of these family's, a fully grown man stark naked, urinating and defecating all over the showground grass. Is this really what you want local children and the tourists, who spend so much money in this town to be greeted with.

The ABC was built on this site adjacent to the showground land as a community hub and to make the cattle market and surrounding land a more successful and more profitable establishment, Housing members of the travelling community on it does neither of those things. DDDC have spent a lot of money improving parking, making low barriers, building premises, why would you be willing to put this at risk? Also why would you potentially take away the prospect of having much needed events for the residents of this town, things like the Christmas fairs, and the country show, thornbridge festival, Eroica, circus, cycle rides, walks, dog shows and Many more would all be at jeopardy if you were to house the travellers on any part of abc or show ground land and after the last two years of pandemic we need these events to be able to get together as a community and start to rebuild confidence and relationships that have been so missed by so many, you will be potentially putting all of this at risk by considering housing two family's from the travelling community on this land in the future.

The residents on this road are made up of at least 75% elderly and or frail people who have all paid their taxes for years and been able to purchase property in what is regarded by many as a quiet and green part of Bakewell in the twilight of these years. I am disgusted therefore that you would even consider putting such travellers on their doorstep, I appreciate you have a duty of care to this travelling family however you also have a duty of care to towards the residents who pay their council taxes and to the tourists who pay handsomely to visit this town, if you house travellers on this land you will be failing us all.

I ask you to take all my points into consideration and I trust you will all do the right thing and not consider this land suitable for habitation by the travelling community in the future.

I have copied this email to all the local councillors, Who I know have an interest in the wellbeing of Bakewell residents and also to Sarah Dines MP as a matter of courtesy as we have previously exchanged communication on this matter.

Best wishes

Laura Newbould on behalf of all my family and fellow residents of Coombs Road.

STATEMENT from Mr David Oakley, Darley Dale Town Council

I am a little disappointed that the Town Council weren't consulted in compiling the long list of potential gipsy and travellers' temporary sites which were only brought to our attention through Social Media. We have had strong local representations already from residents and below are our first thoughts on each location (though we could have done a more thorough analysis had we been consulted). I trust that this information will be taken into account when refining the list and that you will all give due consideration to the strong local feelings about these sites and their suitability.

1. Land NW of the Arc Leisure Centre – not clear where this location is .
2. Columbell Way and Dale Road North – densely populated residential area with a high volume of older residents as it is directly adjacent to Underhall Respite and Resource Centre.
3. Broadwalk Park (The Tippin) – The only recreational facility in Darley Dale apart from the Whitworth and heavily used by local residents, children and local clubs. Vehicle access is difficult and through residential areas.
4. South Side of Old Road – busy junction with queuing traffic with noise and pollution.
5. Lime Grove and Dale Road North – heavily populated area with several blocks of flats adjacent, Directly next to main A6 with associated noise and pollution.
6. East of Bent Lane – rural area with no houses nearby so no easy access to local amenities. Winter access could be a problem.
7. West Side Newell Way – densely populated area with vehicle access through very busy estate.
8. ARC Leisure Car Park – Close to Morledge and locally used recreational facilities.
9. Land off Morledge – Residential area and busy thoroughfare. Designated wildflower area.
10. Crowstones Road – Busy local convenience store and established residential area.
11. Land North West of Pumping Station - used extensively for parking by local residents and main access route to Heritage Way. When large vehicles or camper vans have parked there overnight in the past we have been inundated with complaints from people unable to access their cars or the trail.

It is also worth pointing out that the general understanding from the travellers' own posts and comments on this issue that their preference is to located near to Ashbourne rather than Matlock.

STATEMENT from Ms Annemarie Fell, Local Resident

I understand there is a meeting on Thursday 28th July at 6pm to discuss the identification of possible sites for Travellers and that one possible site is the Old Station Road car park in Rowsley.

I strongly object to this proposal. On previous occasions when the site has been used by travellers we, the local residents, have experienced a number of problems including

- General waste being strewn around even when bins are provided.
- Nappies, human excrement and toilet paper being left on the footpath, despite the fact that chemical toilets are provided.
- Bonfires burning
- Caravans are parked across the footpath making it extremely difficult and intimidating to access the path. In addition fierce dogs are chained and barking near it meaning that it is not used for access when the Travellers are there.
- The feeling of intimidation was such that even using the car park to park stopped happening.
- On departure the site is generally left in an appalling state and not just the car park but the banks and paths in the area.

Even as a temporary site this causes disruption, upset and damage to the local environment including beautiful and much valued rivers with amazing diversity. I dread to think what would happen if it were to become a permanent site, as I have heard it may. The area would not even have time to recover between visits and the river quality would decline steadily; locals would be forced out of a wonderful and much used track for walking and cycling and local businesses would decline.

I am not against Travellers as such but I am against anti-social behaviour and locals feeling wary of using areas of their own village as well as feeling that everyone should be working to protect the river and its surrounding environment.

STATEMENT from Ms Sian Bacon, Rowsley Parish Council

Dear Cllr Purdy and Cllr Hobson,

Rowsley Parish Council wish to express their concerns regarding the situation with the Travellers that is once again up for discussion in the District Council meeting to be held on Thursday 28th July 2022. Over the past few years this issue has appeared with no resolution on at least 5 different occasions. During the periods where the Travellers have stayed in Rowsley, several anti-social behaviour incidents occurred. These incidents include aggressive and intimidating behaviour from individuals

towards staff members of local businesses and users of the car park, defecation on a well-used public cycle trail and the Derwent Heritage Way both of which exit on to the car park. After the departure from Old Station Road car park, enormous levels of rubbish remained which were then cleared by local volunteers several months afterwards as opposed to the District Council. Realistically the list of rules for staying on sites do not show how they will be enforced or what will happen to the families if there are incidents, ultimately, they are homeless due to the lack of action by the District Council over the last twenty years to provide them with a proper managed site and will still need somewhere to go even if they do not follow the rules provided. Rowsley is a small village and so the impact falls greater on its residents and tourists who come to the area.

In addition to this the Traveller families are quite reasonably, due incidents with a very few residents, are unwilling to return to Rowsley. This was highlighted most recently in an article by the Derbyshire Times. They have expressed their wish to be placed down around Ashbourne due to family ties and the Parish Council believe this should be supported. The Old Station Road car park is not private, quiet, or realistically near facilities that would be desirable for people to live on it. There are better spaces even around the Matlock to Bakewell areas than a well-used car park on a busy trail used by tourists and next to businesses in the centre of a small village.

The Parish Council has observed that on permanent traveller sites in other areas there are permanent site managers who are employed to manage the issues raised above and keep the sites in good condition thus helping the local areas to remain clean and harmony to occur between all communities using the space. Derbyshire Dales however have been completely derelict in not providing this support for the temporary sites in the past and this is directly in contrast to the well being of both the Traveller community and the local residents. Rules that are put in place would be better enforced with a proper and familiar site management team which doesn't appear to be one of the suggestions put forward with any of these suggested sites.

Given the illegal dereliction of duty of the District Council to provide proper permanent sites for Travellers in the area at the very least the temporary sites should be properly managed and all issues either anticipated with a level of risk assessment or resolved promptly with all sites returned to a spotless condition shortly after the Travellers have moved or been moved to an alternative site. The failure of the District Council to deal with this issue has created bad feeling in both communities which has spilled over into residents around the Derbyshire Dales being opposed to Traveller sites entirely. This is deeply unfair to both the Travellers and the residents as had sites be properly managed from the beginning much of the bad feeling would not have occurred.

Rowsley Parish Council would request to see the permanent sites issue dealt with as quickly as possible but also that the selected temporary sites are properly managed by a site manager to see a reduction in anti-social behaviour and the rubbish left behind removed promptly and properly.