

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
Agenda Item 6
COUNCIL HELD ON 14 December 2023

STATEMENT from Ms Victoria Friend, Chair Rowsley Parish Council

“Dear Councillors,

The Parish Council and residents of Rowsley are extremely concerned that the decision to designate the car park at Old Station Close in Rowsley as a temporary traveller site has only been postponed and not removed completely. The postponement prior to the meeting on 28th September was due to the extensive representation of local opposition to use of the car park in Rowsley as a temporary site due to its complete unsuitability and the detrimental impact it would have on local business which employ local people, as well as on the local community and tourism industry within the Derbyshire Dales and Peak District National Park. Rowsley is a small village and the car park is essential to our local businesses on the Industrial Estate as well as to tourists using the Derwent Valley Heritage Way, Cycle Trail and numerous popular walks through the National Park to Chatsworth, Bakewell, Stanton Moor and Haddon Hall that all start in the village. The contemporary arts centre, The Level was located on Old Station Close because of the essential amenity of the car park close by. This car park is full of cars all day every day. If the car park is taken out of use the detrimental impact on the village will be enormous and disproportionate. In addition the site is situated on the river bank within the flood zone that has caused such distress to residents of the village in recent years, not least just a few weeks ago when several houses were flooded yet again and the village was completely inaccessible for several hours due to flood water.

The residents of Rowsley would like the assurance of the council that the Old Station Close car park will not be considered as a Traveller site at any point in the future.”

STATEMENT from Ms Sarah Porter, Clerk to Baslow and Bubnell Parish Council

“Hello,

On behalf of Baslow and Bubnell Parish Council I am writing to raise concerns about the traveller item on the agenda for 14th December.

Having expressed concerns over this topic before, I am surprised I was not notified about this report and only heard about it via our District Councillor.

The Council is concerned that any consultation on site will be online only. This is not an inclusive way of engaging the community and should only form one method of consultation.

The Council notes the proposal to appoint land agents to look for suitable sites. Will this include sites which the District Council has already considered and deemed

unsuitable such as the sites within the Peak Park? To not do so would seem a waste of resources.

Previously, Baslow Nether End car park was included as a potential 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 confirm that this site nor any other in Baslow is on a potential list?

I look forward to hearing from you on this matter.

Best wishes,

Sarah”

STATEMENT from Ms Julie Baranek, Clerk to Matlock Bath Parish Council

“We would very much like the following to be passed to Councillors in connection with tonight’s agenda item on Travellers.

I write on behalf of Matlock Bath Parish Council. Councillors watched with interest the debate at the DDDC Council meeting in September on the traveller situation in Derbyshire Dales.

Matlock Bath Parish Council were encouraged to hear that members of the Working Group felt that Station Car Park is not a suitable site for the traveller family. As you will all remember, Council only ever agreed that they should use this as a temporary site until 31st January 2023 although the residents of Matlock Bath have had to endure the travellers encamped there for a number of years.

We noted that the meeting agreed that finding a permanent site for the homeless traveller families was a top priority and should be expedited with great haste. The Parish Council would wholeheartedly agree with this. We would also agree that the whole of the Derbyshire Dales area should share the ‘burden’ of the traveller families whilst permanent sites are found and developed. However, Councillors felt that Matlock Bath over the years has done its bit already.

In previous correspondence to Derbyshire Dales, the Parish Council has expressed great concern regarding the effect the lack of coach parking in the village has had on local businesses. This was echoed at the meeting. Our District Councillor, Cllr Nick Whitehead, spoke strongly and passionately about this and quoted the figures we had obtained from DDDC in 2019.

In 2019 – the last ‘normal’ year, 809 coaches purchased a parking ticket for the coach park bringing an estimated 20,225 visitors to the village (based on a figure of each coach bringing 25 occupants). This was a deliberately conservative estimate.

In comparison, 2023 no coaches were able to park in the coach park, this resulted in an estimated loss of over 20,000 visitors to the village with a resultant loss of income to the businesses in the village. As you will be aware, there is no other town or village in the Derbyshire Dales where businesses are so reliant on visitors transported to it by coach.

Even if each visitor had spent just £5, this is a loss of income to the businesses of the village of around £100,000.

In addition, the loss of income to DDDC – 809 x £5.50 (if they stay less than 3 hours) - £4450, toilets – 20,000 x 20p - £4,000.

The Parish Council is strongly requesting that the family on the coach park are moved to another temporary site as soon as possible until a permanent site is established for them. Although in previous years residents have tolerated these travellers over the winter period when tourism is most quiet, we would urge DDDC to move them no later than 31st January – 12 months after they should have been removed. Earlier would be preferable but understand that it might not be possible.

The Parish Council is extremely concerned that some coach companies will not return to Matlock Bath after such a lengthy time the coach park has been out of action. We would appreciate it if some kind of recompense could be given to these companies to encourage them to return. Perhaps free coach parking until the end of May. This might ensure that coaches return during the early part of the year and the Easter holidays and then subsequently the summer. We are aware that coaches which do not come around Easter time are more likely not to come in the summer.

Although we know that investigation was made into fitting a height barrier some years ago in Station Car Park, we would ask that it be re-visited into possibly finding a solution to prevent other traveller families from using the coach park area. We are aware that many other travellers have visited the site during the time the family have been permitted to use it, which has resulted in an increase in defecation on Lovers Walks, litter, noise and anti-social behaviour.

On behalf of all residents and businesses in Matlock Bath, we strongly urge the Working Group and Derbyshire Dales District Council to find an alternative temporary, and in due course, a permanent site for these homeless travellers.

Unfortunately, Matlock Bath residents have ‘had enough’ and businesses are greatly feeling the squeeze with the loss of income that has resulted in the travellers being in the village.

We are now another 11 weeks down the line and no action has been taken and the prospect of the coach park returning to its proper use is no nearer. The 2024 tourist season in Matlock Bath starts with the February half term holiday which, because Easter is at the end of March, is even earlier than usual. It would appear that our village is to continue to suffer the following for the foreseeable future.

Environmental issues – I understand that the Council has given this a top policy priority and consider them with every decision they make:

- *Noise – the geography of the village means that noise issue echo around the valley. The village suffers the continual barking of dogs often 24 hours a day. Shouting is another issue again often from 5am in the morning until late at night.*
- *Rubbish dumped on the site which has to be cleared by DDDC staff.*
- *The surrounding footpaths in a conservation area/grade 2 listed park are being used as a human toilet making them unusable by both residents and visitors.*

Behaviour such as this would not be tolerated from any other residents of Derbyshire Dales.

The economic effect on businesses in the village:

- *As highlighted in the paragraph above*
- *Less quantifiable is the effect that it has on visitors who drive into the car park, the largest and most popular in the village, see the traveller encampment and do not stop. We know it does have an effect as the Parish Council has received correspondence to that effect (which have been passed on to DDDC).*

We now call on the Council to take immediate action and move this family to another tolerated site so that the coach park can return to its correct use. Once this has happened follow the other proposals we have put forward to help restore the tourist economy of the village to its previous level.

The Parish Council did send an e-mail to Paul Wilson, Steve Flitter and Marilyn Franks on 8th October but to date no response has been received.

Kind regards

Julie”

STATEMENT from Mr Harry White, Chairman of Calver Parish Council

“Dear Councillors

I am writing on behalf of Calver Parish Council with great concerns about your search for the Temporary Traveller Sites.

Back in September the decision was made by the council to rescind the decision taken on the subject of Potential Temporary traveller sites last year on the 24th of November 2022.

We have particular concerns for the sites proposed local to Calver, these being The land to the rear of Edge View Stoney Middleton, Hawkhill road Car park Eyam,

Nether End Car Park Baslow the Two sites in Bakewell and Old Station Close Car Park Rowsley.

Just before your full Council meeting in September the agenda item was 'Postponed'.

We ask that this agenda item be permanently withdrawn for future consideration.

None of these sites are appropriate for Traveller families as they are all too close to local residents properties and local businesses in the area.

We totally object to any of the above sites being considered and we expect a reply with decisions made by the council.

I ask that this please be shared with ALL councillors and with Paul Wilson the Chief Executive.

Kind Regards

Harry White, Chairman of Calver Parish Council"

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