

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
COUNCIL HELD ON 24 November 2022

STATEMENT from Northwood & Tinkersley Parish Council,

To whom it may concern,

I would like to pass on the Parish Council's thanks to the members of the gypsy and traveller working party for properly considering the potential sites put forward by the officers of DDDC. They clearly looked in detail at each site and listened to local information.

I hope their recommendations are supported by the rest of the Council.

Northwood & Tinkersley Parish Council Clerk

LETTER from Ms Sian Bacon, Clerk to 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 24th November 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.

STATEMENT from John Youatt on behalf of the owners of the Woodyard,

I formally submit the Woodyard at Homesford as a permanent travellers site for 8 pitches plus amenity land. It meets all 6 criteria in your list and was previously adopted by the Council and conditionally approved.

You refused this site recently, in the face of witness statements by three experts. One of them, Dr Siobhan Spencer MBE for DGLG, presented compelling human rights evidence that was not even acknowledged. Also, the decision was influenced by a false and improper claim by your leader that he had a site in mind. Clearly not. Applications should be determined on their own merits.

You then set out the investments you would make with taxpayer money. These are uncoded but considerable, in breach of government guidance which encourages site development by the private sector.

Also, you set a value cap of 3 times agricultural value. This is significantly less than the going rate on the open market for permanent provision. The owner of the Woodyard has had offers by travellers, but heavily depressed by the short life (3 years) and limited number (3 years) of the earlier permission.

I recommend that you adopt and invite the resubmission of the Woodyard. This would provide a solution within a few months, much shorter than an appeal.

The Inspector determining an appeal should acknowledge the Aberdeen appeal decision, which gave overriding weight to that Council's failure to provide.

John Youatt for the owners of the Woodyard.