

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE - 30 May 2024

STATEMENT from Ms Catherine Green, Ashbourne Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“Hi,

I'm not against the use of the overspill car park for the gypsy family for a while, but I think it worth speaking to them/ their representatives about how to make it less controversial for town.

How to stop others joining them? Lower height barrier after arrival?

How to ensure sanitary conditions? Hire a decent toilet rather than poor portaloo?

Conditions re noise overnight?

There are those in the town who have horrific racist attitudes that we shouldn't pander too, but also some legitimate concerns based on previous visits by the family. We should be a welcoming town for all

Catherine”

STATEMENT from Cllr Caroline Cooper, Ashbourne Town Council regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“Looking to the council's proposal to include fishpond meadow as a temporary site for travellers. This is simply not an option we have been awarded 13.5 million levelling up fund to improve the town part of which is to return the marketplace to its rightful use for the public to use it should never have been used as a carpark and defaced as it was. With the loss of this parking, it makes it all the more necessary to keep the overspill to revert it to full time use.

How disgusting it has been over the times the travellers have invaded sites in Ashbourne illegally at a considerable cost to the council and the council taxpayers.

In no way is this area in the centre of our town suitable for travellers.

The council has had offers of a site in the past and refused it they have also wasted our money on drug dealers to no avail.

They have been offered a home and turned it down they state they want to be close to relatives they live in Uttoxeter.

Ashbourne has the distinction of being the gateway to the peak we have put up with abusive language mooning to young people, litter, body fluids theft from shops.

Fishpond overflow carpark is not the place. You have rented out fishpond I wonder did you tell these people at the time you intended to invade the space with travellers.

Ashbourne has their fair share find them somewhere else.

You talk about more houses another school what contribution are they making to the local accompany none that what.”

STATEMENT from Cllr Ann Smith, Ashbourne Town Council regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“I see that the agenda item for a temporary tolerated traveller site has reared its ugly head again. I find it completely unacceptable that this area is being proposed again. My reasons are as follows:

It is in a residential area, the area is overlooked by flats, which have several elderly and vulnerable residents.

The overflow is used in the summer months for parking, this will impact on tourism in Ashbourne.

We have had previous problems with travellers on this site and other sites in Ashbourne.

There was an increase in crime throughout the town.

Residents had to put up with verbal abuse and threats.

These have been reports of threatened sexual violence and indecent exposure.

The area, and other areas in the town that have been used, had to put up with the defecation with human faeces causing severe problems for our town.

We have had to put up with loud music being played all hours of the day and night.

Trade will be severely affected, and our town will become a virtual ghost town as no one will want to venture anywhere near our town or our facilities.

The area backs onto the fish pond and is a walkway to our recreation ground, where young children and adults visit, they have received verbal abuse and threats of violence in the past.

The area is subject to flooding.

There is no sanitation, not that these travellers would use any facilities provided.

Residents have to pay for the traveller’s rubbish to be taken away, pay for temporary toilets on site, not that they will be used, these travellers use the open air, but we have to absorb the costs.

I cannot for the life of me see how this could be deemed suitable.

This has been deemed unsuitable before so what's changed, apart from the change in Party politics. I would be interested to know just what makes this area 'suitable' in the eyes of DDDC. Nothing has changed on the site itself.

How many times do we have to keep on putting in our objections?"

STATEMENT from Ms Amanda Heading, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

"Good evening,

I'm writing regarding the proposal to have a Temporary Travellers Site at the carpark at Old Station Close, Rowsley.

I understand that a site needs to be found but I'd suggest this is in too public a place and is too well used by the local community. The site proposed is in a very well-used public area, where businesses have been established for a number of years, the footpath installed to link Rowsley and Matlock along the disused railway line for walkers/runners and cyclists to use, and the parking area is always busy for local inhabitants of the area, as well as visitors to the Peak District. I walk my dogs along the footpath and river several times a week and am careful to ensure dog mess, as well as litter, is picked up.

When the travellers were last there using this area, I stopped walking my dogs and running along the river, to avoid starting/ending up near the travellers' site. It was messy, noisy and intimidating. If the mess and destruction left there the last time travellers used it is anything to go by, I don't think it's a good advertisement to encourage tourism to the Peak District either. Moreover, the Rowsley residents are already having to deal with the result of travellers using the carpark adjacent to the Recreation Ground - using the field edges for toileting continues to make it unsafe to walk the dogs there. The residents of Rowsley have already been negatively affected by travellers using these public areas.

Having a Temporary Travellers Site at Old Station Close would simply continue to impact on the community's use of the public areas, the cleanliness of the surrounding area and the local businesses. It would impact on tourists travelling to the Peak District, being opposite The Peak Village shopping outlet and near the entrance to the Peak Park. Businesses have worked extremely hard over the last few years to encourage visitors to this area - this proposal would surely have an extremely detrimental effect on this.

Therefore, I do not think that Old Station Close is appropriate for consideration as a Temporary Travellers Site.

Can you please ensure this email is shared with all DDDC councillors in advance of the Community & Environment Committee of Derbyshire Dales District Council meeting on Thursday 30th May.

Yours faithfully, Amanda Heading"

STATEMENT from Ms Emma Tougher, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“To whom it may concern,

I am disgusted to learn that you have decided to possibly use the over spill car park in Ashbourne to let the family of Travellers live there, be it temporary or otherwise!! I have said before and I will say it again, we the people of Ashbourne do not need these individuals.

All they do anywhere they go is upset the hard-working shop keepers, by going into their shop and help themselves to items and do not pay for them and physically and verbally abuse the towns folk and when we try to defend ourselves and the Police are called, we are in the wrong and the Travellers get away with it. So why should we have to put up with this. You have had ample time to find somewhere else for the families to live but no you, always end up with coming back to Ashbourne for them to live here!!! Great idea when Ashbourne Reborn is taking place and then you want to turn it into a dumping ground.

WELL NOT ANYMORE.

Yours, Emma Tougher, A disgruntled Ashbournian”

STATEMENT from Ms Joan Mould, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

Hello, my name is Joan Mould, I live in Ashbourne in the block next to the overspill. I have heard that it is back on the list for a gypsy sight. I am dreading this as The last time they were here I didn't get one night's sleep, they parked a transit type van under my bedroom window and the autistic son was out every night in it, playing music full blast, shouting abuse and banging on the van and caravans, from the very early hours, I'm 73 now with a heart problem, I can't cope with the lack of sleep, plus he shouted when we walk out to go shopping.

This is the heart of Ashbourne, and the field and park are where I walk for my exercise and nature and have to walk past or through the overspill to get there. I don't generally complain about things but I this is causing me stress. Mrs Joan Mould”

STATEMENT from Mr Keith Avery, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“I'm sure you have had plenty of emails regarding the matter already.

I have the same feelings as many locals regarding the situation it's disgusting that you would consider using the overflow car park for travellers. Every time they come to Ashbourne, they love nothing but mess and its bad imagine for the town we are currently trying to improve the town for visitors and locals, and you want to plonk

travellers in the middle of town which is an eye sore and untidy and will only drive visitors away.”

STATEMENT from Ms Loretta Clayton, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“The overspill carpark is not suitable for the travellers; they are an eyesore to see as you drive past and the fair was stopped coming as it was noisy and it was made for an overspill carpark. Why can it not be used as extra parking Ashbourne needs it. We do not need travellers. Stick them on Bakewell showground.”

STATEMENT from Ms Claire Fernihough, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“I am writing this email to oppose to the temporary travellers’ site on the fishpond meadows site/overflow car park. My daughter who is 12 walks through this car park every day to get to school (along with hundreds of other children walking to local schools), she wouldn't be able to walk any other way from our house. I also don't feel she would be safe walking past these travellers as they have been there before and weren't very pleasant to the general public especially children. If this site was to go ahead, she would not be able to attend school this would then affect her education!

This site is too close to the town centre and will deter passers by stopping in our town and so will have effects on the towns income especially so close to tourist season. Also, this car park is needed as a car park during tourist season as the town gets extremely busy.

Last time they were there the shoplifting from local shops increased significantly this is not fair on local businesses.

Also, residents living opposite this site were afraid to leave their homes and kept awake all night with dogs barking and shouting.

Please re consider this site it is not suitable at all. There are plenty of sites out of the town centre which would be more suitable.

Yours sincerely”

STATEMENT from Ms Tracy Foxon, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“Re the overspill carpark

This is unacceptable for this area to be back on the agenda for the temporary tolerated traveller site.

My reasons and probably everyone in Ashbourne.

It's a residential area, the area is overlooked by flats, which have several elderly and vulnerable residents.

The overspill carpark is used in the summer months for parking, this will have an impact on tourism in Ashbourne.

We have had previous problems with the travellers on this site and other sites in Ashbourne.

Resident had to put up with verbal abuse and threats, loud music at all hours of day and night.

We have had to put up with defecation with human faeces causing severely problems for the town.

Trade was severely affected, and the town was virtual a ghost town.

The area backs onto the fish pond and is a walkway to our recreation ground where young children and adults visit.. they have received verbal abuse and threats of violence in the past.

The area is subject to flooding.

Residents have to pay for the traveller's rubbish to be taken away, pay for temporary toilets on site, not that they use them. We the residents of Ashbourne have to absorb the cost.

I cannot see why anyone would think this was a good idea.

This has been deemed unsuitable before so what's changed, apart from the change in party politics.

Nothing has changed on the site itself.

Tracy Foxon"

STATEMENT from Ms Sue Warren, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

I am writing to object about the overspill carpark being put forward for the use of travellers. When they were there before we had music blaring out, a dog barking day and night, a lad sitting in one of the vans blasting the vans horn, I live opposite with my disabled husband, and it got that we couldn't have the windows open due to the noise. I work full time so when i get home I don't want to be coming home listening to a racket from across the road! The Shawcroft flats, Chatsworth Court, Lakeside and other housing areas has older people living there who have worked and paid their taxes why should they have to put up with noise and see some of the travellers peeing up the outside of toilets which were put there for them to use.

**LETTER from J R Harrison, Chairman, T C Harrison Group Ltd to regarding
Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group**

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITE - Old Station Road Car Park, Rowsley

T C Harrison have operated from Wyebridge Garage, Old Station Close, Rowsley, DE4 2EL for nearly 20 years and we are very disturbed to hear that a Gypsy and Traveller Settlement is proposed at the car park 150 metres away from our front entrance.

We would like to lodge the strongest objection to this and to state that the settlement in this location is not acceptable to us.

In previous periods of Gypsy/Traveller settlement in Rowsley we experienced several incidents where excrement and rubbish were deposited on the perimeter of our property and many occasions of rowdy noise pollution with an unsettling threatening air. In addition, access to premises was obstructed by the parking of vehicles from or visiting the settlement. If rules were in place for this previous occupation, it is clear that they were not adhered to and the site effectively managed, in this respect we are deeply concerned of the Council's experience in managing such a site in a village location.

The use of the car park removes an amenity for local residents and visitors to local businesses. This would be of particular concern in summer months with the influx of tourism to the area. We would also ask the Council to consider any environmental damage the settlement may cause and impact on the nearby river.

We go to great lengths to protect and maintain continuity of our business and to keep our law-abiding staff in safe employment. We feel that this proposed settlement would undermine this.

We also feel that it seems that proposals for the settlement at the Rowsley site have been formulated in a hasty and non-transparent way and it is not clear why proposals for alternative sites have been rejected.

Could you please accept this emailed letter as our strongest objection to this proposal, and you have permission for this letter to be used as a formal objection in the next full Council meeting scheduled 28th September.

I can confirm that permission is given for this letter to be circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting and to Paul Wilson and other officers of Derbyshire Dales District Council.

Yours sincerely



**J R Harrison
Chairman**

STATEMENT from Ms Sherrie Yeomans, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“I have been advised that there is an agenda item again on the Temporary Travellers Site at Ashbourne Overspill Carpark.

I find it completely unacceptable that this has once again been added as an agenda point and strongly disagree for this area to be used and my full reasons are below.

This is a residential area, and the Carpark is overlooked by flats which the majority of the residents are elderly and/or vulnerable.

Ashbourne has limited car parking as it is, and this area is used as an overspill for residents and visitors to our beautiful town with lots of small independent retailers. There has previously been an increase in the town when travellers have located to Ashbourne and feel this will bring an end to some of these local businesses if there is an increased theft in shops.

There were also reports of threatened sexual and indecent exposure by travellers previously and they also used verbal abuse and threats to local residents.

The areas they have previously used had to deal with defecation and human faeces on car parking machines.

Residents had to put up with loud music throughout the day and night which is unfair to the elderly people living very close to the area proposed.

The area backs onto the fishpond and is walkway to the recreation ground and to houses on the park estate. Young children and adults visit the recreation ground and I feel that they would feel unsafe walking due to the travellers being abusive in the past.

There is no sanitation on the area and travellers always leave all their rubbish which ends up being paid to be cleared by the council, which basically comes from the council tax budget that we all end up paying for.

The area is also subjected to flooding in the past.

We also play the Royal Game of Shrovetide and most years the ball plays in this area and this would cause a lot of unrest and the travellers would be angry with this.

This has been unsuitable in the past and cannot understand why it has been added again to the agenda apart from a party change.

Please listen to the residents of Ashbourne as this area is not suitable for travellers.

Regards

Sherrie Yeomans”

STATEMENT from Ms Gayle Brown, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“Please do not allow the Gypsy’s to use the overspill car park in Ashbourne. The people who have stated they want to settle in Ashbourne are gypsy’s and their nature is not to settle, pay taxes, adder to the laws in towns. They have proved that they will not live to guidelines outside of the Law. They last time did not even use the provided toilet, use the waste facilities.

People of Ashbourne and Matlock do not pay cheap council tax, we don’t get services fulfilled (waste collections, when I have paid, 3 times for the green bin to be emptied it has not been done in line with what was set out) Potholes are not a new thing for the Derbyshire area.

Streets and pavements in the town are dangerous but, in the housing, areas are also not maintained. (I fell and had to have 4 stitches in my knee, when I looked for compensation, I was told the pavements on Park Avenue were maintained-They are terrible and I have fallen again since) Projects starting and taking ridiculous amounts of time to complete.

Be honest, the small businesses that have had services unpaid for while the Gypsy’s have been resident cannot afford this. We are a hard working town, we deserve for the council to stick up for our rights.

Kind regards
Gayle Brown”

STATEMENT from Mr Jan Hobot, Head Riverkeeper, Haddon Estate, Peacock Fly Fishing Club regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“Dear Derbyshire Dales District Council,

I am writing to you to **object** to the proposal that Old Station Car Park is made into a site for travellers.

My name is Jan Hobot and I am a full time Riverkeeper for Haddon Estate. Haddon owns the fishing rights and land directly opposite the proposed traveller site. My full-time job is to maintain a healthy river system, and deal with all the problems that may bring, including pollution, litter and illegal fishing. Anglers pay to fish the river through our fishing club.

I find it incredible that the site is even being considered to house travellers again after the problems we had last time. The last time the site was used it caused a vast amount of extra work and stress.

A reminder of the problems:

- We encountered numerous counts of illegal fishing (poaching) and killing of fish. This is a rural crime and is covered by the Theft Act.

- Litter / Pollution. It took at least **1 year** to clear the majority of the rubbish that was left on the bankside directly below where the site was last time. Due to the steepness of the banks, some of that rubbish still remains there! This was made up of plastics, sanitary products, green waste and tyres. The worst thing was the Portaloo that had been provided by the council. It had been lifted and thrown down the bankside.

Everything from the Portaloo deposited into the river.

- Many of my angling club members were shouted at, intimidated and not allowed to enjoy the river. That section of river became a no-go area!

Secondly, as a resident of Rowsley, here are my reasons:

- Safety concerns. The last time the travellers were on this site, we would have them visit the road I live on numerous times a week looking for employment. The individuals were confrontational and intimidating. Not nice when we would be enjoying time in the garden with my children. It also didn't help that I had dealt with many of them in regard to illegal fishing.

- Old Station Car Park is a well-used car park by the general public (mainly walkers) and in current times is full to capacity most days. In the event of the traveller site being created again, the public will park elsewhere in the village. This will mean already narrow side roads being impassable in places.

I give permission for this email to be shared with ALL councillors and all interested parties within the councils.

Kind regards

Jan Hobot
Head Riverkeeper, Haddon Estate
Peacock Fly Fishing Club”

STATEMENT from Ms Rachel Murt, Ashbourne Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“It has been brought to my attention that the overspill carpark in Ashbourne town centre is being proposed as a temporary site for travellers.

I do not support the use of this site for this purpose.

The overspill carpark is intended to provide additional parking for our town centre. With the current development works being undertaken, I believe it is essential that this overspill parking is kept available for use for the town parking.

I do not support the temporary traveller site proposal for Ashbourne for the overspill carpark.

Rachel Murt”

STATEMENT from Ms Sandra Barks, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“We don’t want the travellers on Derbyshire land they are not very clean leave a lot of rubbish and they are not very good and use everything in town no to the travellers in town.”

STATEMENT from Mr Gary Quittenton-Shaw, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“Dear Community & Environment Committee

I am writing to formally object to the underhanded manner in which the Council is forcing through the proposed establishment of a traveller site on the car park located in Rowsley. The Community & Environment Committee of Derbyshire Dales District Council will be holding a ‘closed’ meeting on Thursday, 30 May, and it appears that a foregone conclusion has already been made.

As a local resident and business owner, I have in the past raised significant legitimate concerns regarding the suitability of this location, but these concerns seem to have fallen on ‘deaf ears’.

Even the Travellers themselves do not want to be on this site. Other more favourable locations have been found which they prefer, but they seem to be ‘off the table,’ and it does leave you thinking that the decision is being made based solely on what Political Party the Councillor in the other areas are affiliated with, rather than the needs of the Travellers and Residents themselves.

I am a member of the Labour Party and politically active on Twitter, with 5,147 followers, including many MPs from the Labour Party and have followers such as Tom Baldwin, the author of “Keir Starmer: The Biography.”

If this process is not conducted transparently, I will voice my concerns to my Twitter followers and also next time I attend the Labour Party Conference.

Recently, the Travellers were evicted from our playing fields. During their short stay, they intimidated us at the Post Office, asking us to supply large amounts of water for their caravans. The last time they occupied the car park, we at the Post Office endured a ‘living hell.’ Hordes of children were using distraction techniques to attempt to take goods, and all outbuildings had to be locked. An elderly couple, lifelong residents of Rowsley, were duped out of £700 for garden hedge trimming and subsequently were forced to move into sheltered accommodation in Bakewell, they both passed away shortly after.

During their stay, the noise was constant, all the local businesses and residents suffered, not just the Post Office, the local pubs/restaurants such as the Grouse & Claret, the small local businesses occupying from the industrial estate also reported items going ‘missing’.

The last time the Car Park was used as a temporary site, after they left and estimated £20,000 was spent cleaning up the amount of rubbish and excrement, they left behind.

Tourist walkers coming to our area had nowhere to park, so they were simply parking outside all the houses on Church Lane, sometimes all day when they went on a long hike, our customers had nowhere to park and had an adverse impact on our business.

In conclusion, I urge the planning department to reconsider the proposed location for the traveller site. While it is essential to provide appropriate sites for travellers, this should not come at the expense of local residents and businesses. I strongly recommend exploring alternative locations that offer better facilities and less potential for community disruption.

Thank you for considering my objections. I trust that the planning department will take these concerns seriously and act in the best interests of all parties involved.

Yours faithfully,

Gary & Dene Quittenton-Shaw”

STATEMENT from Ms Tricia Barclay, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“I am emailing to say that I oppose the Ashbourne proposed site.

There is going to be a great deal of upheaval in Ashbourne with the worked proposed through the next 18 months & all spare parking will be required.

Tricia Barclay”

STATEMENT from Mr Stephen Bones, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“I do work at Natural Stone Sales Ltd in Rowsley.

I wish to oppose plans to turn Rowsley car park into a traveler site on the grounds the site is unsuitable:

These points are from past experience when the site was occupied by the travelers in 2019

- 1) No electricity on site.
- 2) the car park is used by tourists, cyclists, children and dog walkers and the businesses in the immediate area creating a very full carpark most of the time.
- 3) Most of the employees and customers of the local area feel too intimidated to use the car park. This creates chaos parking vehicles any where other than the carpark.

4) Even though portable toilets are provided there was clear evidence that human excrement was on the cycle trail and around the site when the travelers arrived . When the travelers vacated there was not an increase in the excrement .

5) There is a school around the corner full of small children.

Stephen Bones”

Letter from Ms Sian Bacon, Clerk to Rowsley Parish Council regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

Dear Committee,

Rowsley Parish Council wish to express their concerns regarding the current proposal that is once again up for discussion at the District Council for the two Traveller families that have declared themselves homeless within the Derbyshire Dales

Although we recognise the need for a site, we do not think that the car park on Old Station Close in Rowsley is a suitable place for them. Rowsley is a small village and the impact of forcing a Traveller site on its residents and businesses is therefore disproportionate. Also, the car park is absolutely essential to our local businesses on the Industrial Estate as well as to tourists using the Derwent Valley Heritage Way, White Peak Cycle Trail and the numerous walks through the National Park to Chatsworth, Bakewell, Stanton Moor and Haddon Hall that are taken from the village. This car park is full of cars all day every day. The contemporary arts centre, The Level was located on Old Station Close because of the essential amenity of the car park close by as it has no car parking of its own.

When they last left Rowsley the Travellers expressed their reluctance to return to the village, which was highlighted in an article by the Derbyshire Times. They have expressed their wish to be placed near Ashbourne due to family ties. The Old Station Close car park is not private, quiet, or near necessary facilities. There are much better spaces around the Matlock to Bakewell areas than a well-used car park in the centre of a small village that is essential to local businesses and visitors alike.

When travellers stayed in Rowsley in the past there was no enforcement of the rules established for the site. Several anti-social behaviour incidents occurred. These incidents included aggressive and intimidating behaviour from individuals towards staff members of local businesses and users of the car park as well as defecation on the Derwent Heritage Way and cycle trail, both of which exit onto the car park. The constant barking of the dogs chained up outside 24/7 and shouting in the early morning disturbed local residents as well as guests staying at the Grouse & Claret pub which is located opposite the site. After the Travellers finally abandoned the Old Station Close car park they left enormous quantities of rubbish behind. This was eventually cleared by local volunteers several months afterwards, NOT by the District Council team.

We would like to point out that due to the illegal dereliction of duty of the District Council to provide proper permanent sites for Travellers in the area, at the very least the undesignated temporary sites should be properly managed. All issues should either be anticipated with a level of risk assessment or resolved promptly when they occur. All sites should be returned to a spotless condition shortly after the Travellers have moved or been moved to an alternative site. The historic failure of the District Council to manage these sites effectively has created bad feeling which has led to residents around the Derbyshire Dales being opposed to Traveller sites entirely. This is deeply unfair to both the Travellers and the residents. If sites had been properly managed from the beginning much of the bad feeling would not have occurred.

Finally, we expect that if Rowsley is included in the proposed consultation process, in spite of the high level of opposition from local residents, then every member of this committee as well as all members of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group have the decency to attend a public meeting in Rowsley to explain why the numerous and legitimate concerns of the businesses and residents are not being taken seriously enough to prevent the disproportionate impact of a temporary traveller site being placed upon them once again, as it has been multiple times over the years.

Ultimately these families are homeless due to the failure of the District Council over the last twenty years to provide them with a proper permanent managed site. Forcing them to live in an unsuitable car park in a small village is no solution to this problem.

Yours sincerely,



Sian Bacon

Clerk to the Parish Council

STATEMENT from Ms Maureen Friend, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“To the Derbyshire Dales District Council

I am an 81 year old resident of Rowsley with a very clear memory.

A temporary site on the public car park in Rowsley was created for travellers at great expense a few years ago.

We were informed that it was the only site available at that time.

It was not suitable. Even after the Council had the site cleared and installed Portaloo's (not used, the travellers say it is “against their culture”) travellers themselves rejected the site and moved on. After they moved on the Council did not clear up the mess left behind, it was cleared up by volunteers !

The site is dark and dank and perched above a fast running river on a steep slope with no fencing.

The travellers are always accompanied by dogs. The dogs bark any time they are spooked no matter what time of the day or night, therefore the last time they were here most nights my sleep was broken several times as my house is very close to the site.

I hope that the needs of residents who take care of the village, pay their rates and taxes and respect the law will be given equal consideration as you debate this.

Please make sure that this email is circulated to all members of the committee.

Maureen Friend
Rowsley Resident”

STATEMENT from Ms Theresa Calladine, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“Please don’t let this happen to,our lovely town.As much as we know they need a site,they have been offered other sites and have turned them Down .as a long time ashbournian I don’t think it will do the town a lot of good if they are allowed to come onto the fishpond site and if they are travellers why do they need a permant site.

Regards Theresa Calladine”

STATEMENT from Ms Mia Garcia, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“To whom it may concern,

I would like to express my concern regarding the proposed traveller's site in Rowsley.

I work on the site proposed and have concerns about coming into work, parking my car and leaving as they can be quite intimidating as I experienced the last time they were here.

As a young woman coming into work and leaving work on my own, I wouldn't feel comfortable on my own as last time I had people to walk me to and from my car as it was worrying what verbal comments would be made.

Thank you for taking the time to read through my concerns.

Kind regards

Mia”

STATEMENT from Mr Phil Foster, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

"I wish to lodge my objection to the possibility of a traveller site in the old station car park in Rowsley.

By considering this site in Rowsley, I feel you fail to meet the needs of the residents and businesses already in the village. I also feel that this is also inappropriate place for the travellers themselves. The site is on the edge of a flood plain with a steep unsafe bank down to the river.

Existing businesses would have to be moved from the site and businesses in the area would be adversely affected.

I understand that the travellers have occupied the area before and despite the Council providing amenities for them, they were upturned and unused and human excrement and rubbish was left in the area.

I use the pathway to travel to my daughter's home and my grandchildren also use the path to visit me. I would not let them if the site became established.

The Level Centre has recently been awarded a grant to help disabled people, it would be a great pity if this facility needed to be removed. It is also obvious that the other businesses there are very busy too.

The car park itself is extensively used and if these cars were forced to park on the roads this would cause a traffic hazard.

I understand that this site has been considered in the past, nothing in the area has changed and so I do not understand why it is now under consideration.

I respectfully ask that you keep me informed of any further decisions or considerations. My contact details are below.

Phillip Foster"

STATEMENT from Ms Janet Stubbs, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

"Hello, I have received information about the traveller site coming to the fish pond meadow, this is not a suitable site for the travellers or residents and businesses of Ashbourne. It is in the middle of the town too close to residents, and also would be taking much need car parking space especially in summer time when we get the tourists. We will be losing park spaces when the market place is made pedestrianised. If tourist can not find parking they will not stop in the town therefore it would be bad for businesses and the town already has enough empty properties. I would like to attend the meeting on Thursday 30th May and register to speak could you tell me now I do this please.

Regards, Janet Stubbs"

STATEMENT from Mr Paul Cottam, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“I am a resident of the village of Rowsley and I object to any proposal for a travellers site either permanent or temporary on the Old Station Car Park, Rowsley.

I complained to the Council in June 2020 when the council allowed use of the Rowsley Old Station Car Park as a site. I outlined an incident where my wife and I went for a bike ride on the recently constructed walking and cycle trail from Rowsley through to Matlock. At the Old Station Rd car park where the trail begins I was shocked at what we were faced with - there were numerous caravans parked around the entrance and to get to the start of the trail we had to cycle through the vans and then through a group of the travellers sat out in chairs blocking the trail entrance. The car park itself resembled a rubbish tip. As we tried to get to trail entrance we were verbally abused by the men sitting around blocking the way. As we rode along the trail we passed several groups of parents and children riding cycles and also a family group out for walk who were all headed for that car park and I was concerned for what they might face on their arrival there. I had felt intimidated when I tried go through the car park to access the trail - is that how we should feel in our own village?

On another occasion I witnessed two of the Travellers lopping down young trees along the trail next to the car park – I could only assume it was for use as fire wood – for the fires they regularly had on the site.

This cycle and walking trail was constructed with the eventual plan being to join it up as a proposed extension of the Monsal trail running from Bakewell through to Matlock -the car park is an ideal staging point for people accessing it and parking their cars and the current proposal for a Travellers site will destroy that amenity. I wouldn't want my children or my family having to go through the encampment to access the trail.

The car park is also a well used amenity for the customers of the nearby businesses - I have parked in there when visiting the businesses. During the daytime the car park is often busy with parked cars.

When the encampment was there no one could use it as car park because they couldn't get actually in for all the caravans (I counted 9 in total) and even if they could park in there - they wouldn't - as the whole scenario was intimidating and they would be worried about the safety of their cars- as I would be .

Also Rowsley at this point is the gateway to the Peak District National Park from the south when travelling on the A6 – when the travellers encampment eventually left the Car Park in 2020, it resembled a rubbish tip. When looking across from the Grouse & Claret Pub towards the car park, the whole hillside was strewn with all types of rubbish which could plainly be seen when driving on A6 – this wasn't a good advertisement for the gateway to the country's most visited National Park.

I spoke to the 3 unfortunate Council workmen who were tasked with clearing the car park up after the Travellers had left – they were there 2 days running and I'm aware they found numerous site of defecation despite there being Portaloos provided for the Travellers on the site.

Residents in the locality at the time felt threatened- I noticed whilst riding on the trail that nearby houses that opened onto the trail had blocked their driveways by parking their cars directly across the front of their caravans and just further down on the trail there was a pub car park that allows several caravans and motorhomes to be left there when not in use and the owners had blocked the entrance by parking a car across it - this is a knock on effect of having the travellers nearby - people feel worried.

To my knowledge NO consultation was sought from the residents of Rowsley or the nearby businesses – in 2020 and again NONE now!

As a rates payer the whole situation is a shambles – you would think that at the very least that the people who will be most affected would be consulted and made aware of it by the Council.

I have only found out about the proposal from a (non council) independent flyer placed in my letter box.

I have previous experience of working and living near Travellers Encampment – I worked in the Attercliffe Industrial area of Sheffield as a Police Officer when numerous Unofficial Travellers sites would frequently periodically descend upon the area. I know from personal experience that the businesses in the vicinity of these sites suffered immensely from all types of problems associated with the Travellers, from theft, damage, defecation, rubbish tipping, burning off and intimidating behaviour. I attended countless incidents of this type as a Police Officer.

I also lived in the Lodge Moor area of Sheffield when the Sheffield City Council opened the Plantation site for Travellers. It was sited in a densely wooded area (hence Plantation). It was within a quarter mile of the estate where I lived and again the same problems occurred - theft, damage, defecation, rubbish tipping, burning off and intimidating behaviour to the residents. There was a particular problem with the Travellers children/teenagers regulary taking over the local childrens playground and bullying anyone who complained.

The wooded area where the site was situated had been a well used amenity with footpath and cycles routes through it, however this area quickly became a dumping ground for defecation (even though the site had properly constructed toilets) rubbish piles, burning off, scrapped vehicles – the interior of the wood eventually resembled a rubbish tip.

The council say they will manage the site and the number of caravans, however they have failed to manage the site when it was situated in Rowsley in 2020 and they have also failed to manage the number of additional caravans and occupants on the currently tolerated Travellers site on the Car Park in Matlock near the Train Station and Sainsbury, the numbers of caravans and vehicles have varied greatly in the time

they have been there - the last I read about it was in March this year was that the Council were considering applying for an eviction order to remove the additional caravans.

Does that sound like good management !!??

The small rural village of Rowsley is definitely not a suitable place to site a Travellers Encampment,

other than the fact that its got an "out of the way" handy non-payment car park (so no loss of revenue) -it has NO other factors which make it suitable.

I would like to speak at the upcoming Council meeting about my experiences, as I believe that probably non of the Committee members have had any experience of actually living and working in the locality of a Travellers Encampment.

Yours faithfully

Paul Cottam"

STATEMENT from Ms Kerry Worthington, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

"We gather that, despite having been deemed unsuitable in 2022, consideration is again being given to using Rowsley Old Station Close car park as a traveller site. Nothing has changed since that time to suggest it is any more suitable.

The car park itself is not in a good state of repair and its situation near the river is surely not a safe site .

Despite its condition the car park is a very well used village facility with no other suitable public alternative. Not only is it used by people using the walking trail but is an essential parking area for those using the popular local businesses on the industrial estate (one being a specialist centre for the learning disabled community). As secretary of the Rowsley Village Hall I am also very concerned the effect that losing the car park would have on activities/ events at the hall. Since the closure of Cauldwell Mill and car park , Old Station Close is the nearest public parking facility. There is only limited roadside parking around the hall.

Therefore I would very strongly oppose any move to approve this site as suitable for travellers.

Regards, Kerry Worthington"

STATEMENT from Ms Carol Stubbs, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

"I wish to register my strong objection to the proposal to allow the above overspill car park site to be used for a traveller site - under any circumstances, temporary or otherwise on these grounds:

1. The car park is on a frequently congested main arterial road through Ashbourne.
2. The fishpond area is an extremely attractive wildlife area which is used by locals and visitors and adjacent to the park and fishpond which are subject to current proposals for further enhancement steered by a committee which has the support of Ashbourne residents. Even if the fishpond was 'screened' off from the travellers, their vehicles and vans would be a complete eyesore for that locality and detrimental to the improvement plans.
3. The noise and eyesore of the traveller site, their activities and dogs would be untenable for local residents - many of them elderly and housebound in adjacent flats. The traveller noise and disturbance was a huge nuisance for all the months they were sited on the car park adjacent to the health centres and almshouses.
4. There are no facilities on the site which means DDDC providing more toilet cubicles - further mess and eyesore (and ultimately paid for from council tax revenue).
5. Ashbourne is struggling to overcome closures since lockdown and to attract new businesses to its empty shops. The levelling up project is underway to help support this, the last thing Ashbourne and its people want is for a traveller site slap bang in the middle of its community.

For these reasons, the Committee must understand that this site is completely unsuitable. What is being proposed would be thrown out without consideration if any private individual were to register similar use for the site. I for one will not be able to support any political party that is behind this suggestion and completely ignores the wishes of its residents.

Yours faithfully

Carol Stubbs"

STATEMENT from Ms Carol Somerville, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

"Dear Sir/Madam

I live close to Ashbourne and work in the town centre.

I strongly object to a travellers site being considered for the Fishpond overspill car park in Ashbourne for the following reasons

1.It is as its name suggests an overspill carpark as and when needed particularly to cater to the needs of visitors to our town especially in holiday periods.It should remain available for this use.

2.A travellers camp so close to a main thoroughfare through the town would throw a shadow upon this normally picturesque Derbyshire town when we rely so heavily on passing tourists and visitors.It would not give a good impression of the town and therefore would impact businesses that are already struggling to be viable.

3.The last time the site was occupied by travellers it was left in a terrible state particularly owing to the nature of the land being generally wet and prone to flooding next to the Henmore Brook and Fishpond.

4.Also the last time travellers were abusive to local residents causing distress and there must be a concern for the safety of families in the surrounding areas.

The Fishpond overspill car park site is therefore wholly unsuitable for any permanent habitation and I urge you to dismiss this proposal.

Yours Faithfully

C.Somerville”

**STATEMENT from Mr David Lee, Local Resident regarding Item 5;
Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group**

“I appose the Old Station Close car park at Rowsley being transformed into a traveller Site for the following reasons:

1 -- The car park is extensively used as the starting point for walkers who explore routes around Rowsley. These include destinations such as Stanton-in-the-Peak and the Haddon Estate lands to the northern of Chatsworth Road.

2 --The Derwent Valley Heritage Way runs from Ladybower Resoviouir, down the Derwent valley, past Chatsworth and onto the historic mills of Derby.

This car park is located on this route so it is used by people who walk this section of the heritage way around Rowsley and onto Matlock or Chatsworth.

3 -- The car park is also used by businesses on the Rowsley industrial estate.

4 -- Businesses at the Junction of Chatsworth Road and the A6 encourage their customers to use this car park otherwise traffic would park close to the junction causing a dangerous situation at an already very busy road.

5 -- Without a car park this small village would soon have serious issues with traffic parking on the narrow roads around Rowsley Primary School, Church Lane and Chatsworth Road (a major route to and from Chatsworth House).

I hope these concerns are very carefully considered before a decision is made.

Regards

David Lee - Rowsley.”

STATEMENT from Mr William Fell, Treasurer for Rowsley Village Hall regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“I am writing to the Committee in my role as Treasurer of Rowsley Village Hall to inform you of the harm it would do to our Village Hall and local users if the Public Car Park on Old Station Close Rowsley was closed in whole or in part, temporary or permanent, for an alternate use which I understand is again being considered by the Council, in this case I believe to be used as a Traveller Community Space.

Our Village Hall has existed for nearly 100 years in Rowsley (centenary coming up in 2027) and is currently grappling with the financial side of operating in the 21st century particularly post-pandemic. We are losing money on an annual basis right now but after huge commitment and hard work by many in the Rowsley community, we are getting closer all the time to breaking even which is planned for our next financial year starting October 1st 2024 and ending September 30th 2025.

Fundamental to breaking even is the hiring of the hall by regular and one-off users for activities such as children’s parties, birthday parties, coffee mornings, bingo, indoor bowls, badminton, table tennis, Pilates, children’s dance lessons, fitness sessions, church activities, Rowsley School use, local Parish Council use (Rowsley and Northwood & Tinkersley), Haddon Hall estate use, Rowsley Christmas Panto, Community initiatives (such as Reel Rowsley and GRowsley) and not least our Community Hub initiative, a huge success on Tuesday mornings for Mum’s/toddlers and people of all ages particularly including the Rowsley older generation. Indeed, this (Community Hub) initiative has been kindly supported by grant monies from Derbyshire Dales District Council, Derbyshire County Council and Foundation Derbyshire.

Our regular and one-off users and those attending/participating at the Village Hall, need and rely on car park space and the car park in Old Station Close is the only public car park in Rowsley and therefore very important to users of the Village Hall as our Hall is situated in School Lane which is a busy road so public car park access is vital.

Without safe and reliable car park access our income will go down as users choose alternative venues for their activities. This would be catastrophic to our finances as we would fail to break even on our financial plan and inevitably be forced to close our Village Hall which would be the most awful outcome for the people of Rowsley. Therefore, I urge the Council to continue with the use of the car park on Old Station Close Rowsley as it is now, the only Public Car Park in Rowsley!

Kind regards

William Fell
Treasurer
Rowsley Village Hall”

STATEMENT from Bernie and Janet Roome, Local Residents regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“Dear Committee Members,

As residents of Church Lane Rowsley for over 40 years, my wife and I want to object in the strongest possible terms against the Council agreeing that the area beyond the end of the public car park on the Old Station Approach at Rowsley be considered suitable for a temporary travellers site.

This area was used unsuccessfully some years ago for this purpose and should not be considered again. During its previous use members of the public were reluctant to leave their vehicles in the car park and instead parked in Church Lane and Woodhouse Lane near the post office and school where the roads are unsuitable for more parking. There is also no longer access to the parking at Caudwells Mill which was available previously.

Furthermore, when the travellers moved on from their use of this site they showed their gratitude by tipping a full Portaloo, which had been provided for their use, down the wooded slope towards the A6 which the poor Council workers had to attempt to clear up. They also left masses of rubbish which again had to be cleared at council tax payers expense. Some of this fly tipped rubbish and human waste will have found its way into the environmentally sensitive River Derwent, which this site lies directly above.

A couple of weeks ago, a group of travellers caravans occupied an area of the Rowsley Recreation Ground and left behind rubbish and human excrement where children and grown ups play football and the school uses the field for its sports day.

PLEASE DO NOT APPROVE THIS SITE FOR USE BY TRAVELLERS

Yours sincerely,

Bernie and Janet Roome”

STATEMENT from Ms Janice Millington, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“I wish to state that I am against the suggested plan of moving the traveller community to the car park off Temple road next to Matlock bath holy Trinity primary School is both irresponsible. This is largely because of the anti social behaviour exhibited in the past which has been reported this has included as I saw for my own eye human excrement and toilet paper strewn where my children who attend the school walk to and from school.

What is worse is that the argument to move the encampment there is so that more money can be made from coach parking thereby suggesting that the well-being of the children of Matlock bath is not as important as day trippers which I think is deplorable.

Can you let me know when this issue will be debated please.

Mrs J Millington”

STATEMENT from Ms Jenny Duffy, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“I would like to express my concern regarding the proposed travellers site at the Old Station Road Car Park.

I'm work at Natural Stone Sales Ltd and use the car park everyday. The car park is normally busy at 9.30am when I arrive and I park in the back half of the car park. I will have no where to park. The last time we had travellers here they took up the entire car park and made it very clear no one else was to enter it and were very intimidating even when you walked past.

I also have concerns that so much money was spend on the new cycle path and it is widely used by walkers and bikers. I feel this will of been a waste of money as the path with end in the middle of a travellers site and will not be used by the public.

Jenny Duffy”

STATEMENT from Ms Helen Baker, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“I am writing in advance of the Council meeting on Thursday 30 May to register my views of the proposal that a traveller site is being considered on the Fish Pond Meadow car park in Ashbourne.

This site is completely inappropriate for both the town and the travellers for the following reasons –

- Ashbourne is spending £15 million this year in levelling up funds to improve the town centre – why then put a gypsy encampment in the middle of the town which in no way improves the look, safety or access to the town.
- This site is adjacent to the town’s park and access routes into the town centre, opposite the biggest and most central carpark in the town (Shawcroft). Children use this route to school and visitors are encouraged to use the town’s green spaces. This proposal would discourage all users from walking alongside a noisy and scruffy caravan site.
- Fish Pond Meadow was designed to be an overflow carpark for Shawcroft, which is a much needed facility as the town is very busy during the tourist season (March to October). Limited parking is always an issue in Ashbourne so why give away an income generating asset to a group who will not be

paying for the use of the land, and not contributing rates or taxes to the local economy.

- Previous experience of travellers in Ashbourne is not good. They took over the playing fields at QEGS and prevented students from being able to use those school facilities for weeks. I was the Chair of Governors at QEGS at the time and personally spoke to the travellers to discuss their needs and try to agree a plan for their departure. They repeatedly lied to the school and did not respect any authorities involved.
- They took over part of the coach park at the bottom of School Lane and separately the leisure centre carpark, causing serious noise disturbances and access restrictions on both occasions. They have taken over Fish Pond Meadow carpark previously and on each of these occasions have stayed illegally for weeks or months, finally leaving when forced to but leaving behind mess and debris which someone else has to clear up.
- A site in the centre of town turns their encampment into a circus where they are fenced in but highly visible and very little privacy is afforded as their way of life is often spent outdoors but they are overlooked by properties and traffic. The site is next to a busy road and as the travellers usually have dogs, fencing is necessary.

The travellers need a site which is not in the middle of a town where they do not cause a disturbance but where they can have privacy and space. They have their own transport so are able to travel to any medical appointments / work / etc as needed.

I would appreciate an acknowledgement to this letter so I know it has reached the appropriate authorities who are involved in this decision making process.

Kind regards

Helen Baker”

**STATEMENT from Ms Laura Crisp, Local Resident regarding Item 5;
Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group**

“I wish to email my strong protest against the possibility of travellers being returned to a site at Rowsley which is totally unsuitable for their needs and safety, and which would also impact negatively on an area used by walkers and cyclists, and small businesses on the closeby industrial estate.

I am shocked this has been mooted as a possible site after it was taken off the list so recently.

Yours sincerely,

Laura Crisp

Rowsley resident”

STATEMENT from Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“Good afternoon Sue

Further to speaking to you recently I write to give you our support in resisting a Traveller site in Rowsley.

I have seen the problems caused when travellers have set up on the Show Ground at Bakewell.

As a resident in Rowsley, I have first hand knowledge of the recent visit made by travellers, which only lasted three days before they were moved on.

The amount of mess made and rubbish left on the village recreation ground after such a short stay was astonishing.

Worse than the domestic rubbish, was the human waste distributed all around the site, including, I understand, the spinney used for `Forest` lessons by children at the village school.

I have no doubt that the site opposite the Grouse and Claret is no more suitable than it was when occupied a few years ago.

The unfortunate facts are that what is a `way of life` for the Traveller community is not compatible with what we view as normal in a Derbyshire village.

I am happy for you to pass on my views, but would ask you not to give my name and address.

By all means give me a call if any clarification is needed.”

STATEMENT from Annemarie Fell, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“I am writing to you regarding the proposal to use the Old Station Close Car Park in Rowsley as a site to house traveller families. I believe the site to be totally unsuitable.

The car park is the only public one in Rowsley and is heavily used by the businesses on the industrial estate, which make a significant contribution to the local economy and who we would be devastated to lose; and by the award winning Level Centre contemporary arts centre which does considerable work with disabled people. It is also used by cyclists and walkers using the White Peak Loop (indeed the access in Rowsley to the loop is in the carpark) and numerous other walks; by users of the Village Hall and parents of the local school who are finding parking near the school impossible since the closure of Caudwells Mill and its car park.

The car park at Old Station Close is not a large one and is always busy. On previous occasions once the traveller vans were in there was no room for anyone else. In addition there have been incidents of anti-social behaviour and abuse directed at users of the car park and local businesses.

Last time it was used for this purpose the vans were parked in such a way that the entrance to the trail was blocked by vans with chained dogs. This made people very nervous of using the car park and the trail. Local business was impacted as people did not have the space or feel comfortable leaving their cars there. At this time, when businesses are struggling with increased costs to put an extra barrier in their way by removing the parking seems totally wrong.

There are no facilities near the car park, it is beside a steep and dangerous slope and is totally unsuitable for the travellers who have said this themselves!

I know that the talk is of making it a temporary site but as the council have been unsuccessfully searching for a site for fifteen years what does temporary mean?

Best Regards,
Annemarie Fell”

**STATEMENT from Helen Keay, Local Resident regarding Item 5;
Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group**

“Hi

I would like to provide a statement for the community & environment committee meeting on Thursday 30th May.

As a resident of Matlock bath I would like to express my concerns in relation to the lack of steps the committee has taken to address the needs of the traveller family currently living on Matlock bath train station car park and the residents of Matlock Bath.

For years we have been promised that a long term solution would be found to the lack of permanent sites across Derbyshire Dales. You are no nearer to finding a solution and this lack of resolution can not go on forever so it is in the interest of all parties for alternative short term options to be considered.

Matlock Bath has hosted the family for 18 months with a devastating impact on the businesses and the community. Lack of parking is driving visitors away on a daily basis. The noise, mess and at times anti social behaviour displayed by the travellers is a constant burden for all residents and visitors. In particular by additional travellers who arrive at various points through out the year and join the family in the tolerated temporary site. Fly tipping is an ongoing problem as is the human waste that is left lying around the village and on lovers walk.

Whilst the council continues its search for a permanent site I find it wholly unfair that the only community in Derbyshire dales to suffer this impact is Matlock Bath and Matlock. Why should Ashbourne, Bakewell and Rowsley be exempt?

Surely the fairest option is that the communities across Derbyshire Dales share the issues and challenges that a temporary traveller site brings.

I have my own theory in relation to why this has happened and believe that it is politically driven. No one wants the travellers in their communities and councillors have actively worked to both limit the number of tolerated sites in both the communities they represent and the communities they reside in. Matlock Bath is a small community and therefore the political impact of these decisions is less.

The latest I have heard is a suggestion that the site is moved from the station car park to temple walk. This is a totally unacceptable suggestion. As an absolute minimum the site should be located elsewhere for the summer season and the illuminations to allow coaches and visitors to return.

Temple walk is an unacceptable site for so many reasons, mainly its proximity to the school. There have been issues in the past when other traveller families have joined the family on the site. Children were approached in the play ground, human waste on the floor that children were having to walk around to get to school and my own daughters were indecently exposed to on two occasions and despite them being able to identify who by, the police did nothing.

The site can not be secured to stop other travellers from entering as the family have to be given access to the over head barrier and in the past they just let other people in.

Perhaps most importantly in all this we have a very vulnerable family who need appropriate living conditions and given the complexity of their needs a car park is totally unsuitable and it is a disgrace that this has been allowed to continue for as long as it has.

I really hope that the committee reinstates the previously tolerated sites and moves the family out of Matlock bath for the rest of the tourist season. This will be a welcome reprieve for both the residents and the businesses whilst you continue your search for a permanent solution. I also hope that a decision can be made that Matlock bath will not be used as a tolerated site Easter to October in future years.

Many thanks

Helen Keay”

Letter from Julie Baranek, Clerk to Matlock Parish Council regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“To: Members of the C&E Committee

The following is a representation from Matlock Bath Parish Council for the agenda item on Travellers at the meeting to be held on 30th May 2024.

Firstly, we have to say that it has proven difficult to prepare such representations due to the lack of a published copy of the recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller working group. We have based our representations on the 3 sources available to us:

- Reports from our ward member Cllr Nick Whitehead – written and verbal received on 20th and 22nd May respectively
- An email received by the Clerk from Robert Cogings – Director of housing dated 22nd May
- An email received by the Clerk from the office of Ms S Dines MP dated 22nd May

Unfortunately, some of the detail in these gives conflicting statements making meaningful representations more difficult.

All of our current representations concern the temporary tolerated sites in the district. Matlock BHath is no stranger to having traveller families on the car parks. They have been 'visiting' the village for many years now. They would 'visit', stay a few weeks and move on. Though an inconvenience, when they left, DDDC would clean up the area and the village could welcome back its full quota of visitors. The Parish Council was a key protagonist in getting height barriers fitted to Temple Road car park to prevent illegal encampments. A height barrier had been in situ at Artists' Corner car park for many years and worked well. We also asked for restrictions on the Station car park but despite many 'surveys', DDDC have failed to produce a viable plan.

One of the homeless traveller families has been placed in the coach parking area of Station Car Park Matlock Bath since November 2022, a period of no less than 19 months. Initially we were informed that they would be 'tolerated' there until 31st January 2023 and then would be moved on.

Matlock Bath is a tourist destination as well as being home to about 800 residents. The reason that the village exists is tourism. It has been its 'raison d'etre' since the first tourists arrived in 1698. Most visitors come by road transport so car and coach parking is essential for the survival of the village. At busy times, parking is not adequate for the demand so to lose such a large area causes problems for the village both in terms of lack of parking and the resultant road congestion. In 2019 around 1.1 million tourists came to the village including many coming on the 800+ coaches that paid to park in the coach park at the station.

Since covid, along with all tourism destinations, Matlock Bath businesses have suffered a downturn of trade. This has been exacerbated by the reduction in parking available. This is a problem that DDDC was aware of yet still housed the family on this site.

As we stated earlier, traveller families have been 'visiting' the village for a number of years so the problems that they bring have been well documented by DDDC and the Parish Council.

The geography of Matlock Bath is that it is in a steep sided gorge. Noise from the basin is amplified and travels up the hillside to where the majority of residents live. The traveller families have dogs which generally live outside and which bark continuously as there is often activity on the car parks for much of the day and night. They do not have mains electricity so use generators which run continuously. The family currently on the coach park have a member who has special needs and when outside he shouts and screams. All of this has been extremely intrusive to many of the residences in village affecting their quality of life. DDDC was aware of these problems but still housed the family on this site.

Some of the traveller families who visit the village insist on using the outside area away from their encampment as their toilet even though in many cases DDDC have provided a portaloos. Adjacent to the area where the travellers are currently housed is Lovers' Walk – an area in the custodianship of DDDC. Its important credentials are all listed on the DDDC website <https://www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/leisure/parks-and-open-spaces/lovers-walks-matlock-bath> This important area has been used as an area of defecation continually for the past 19 months. DDDC was aware of this problem but still housed this family on the coach park.

The current situation with the specific family using the coach park as their home cannot be allowed to continue. We quote from the 'report of the DDDC traveller working group to the Council 28th September 2023' para 4.5 which states we:

consider that this location is not suitable, particularly during the summer time with increased use of the car park by visitors and tourists. The working group acknowledges the frustration of the specific Traveller family and their desire to relocate to a more suitable location. The working group is also aware of the strong representations made by residents and Matlock Bath Parish Council in respect of the length of time that the specific Traveller family has remained in situ. The majority view of the working group (not supported by Councillor Hobson) is that an alternative location must be identified for this specific Traveller family.

We are now 8 months on and the family are still resident on this unsuitable site.

Finally there is the problem that the incumbents do not keep the site tidy. There is rubbish dumped on a regular basis, fencing is moved to block other parts of the car park, their belongings are spread over a large area taking up far more space than they really need and reflects badly in an area that is part of the Matlock Bath conservation area and adjacent to a SSSI

We now move into the area where our information becomes a little unclear. We have the following in an email from the office of Sarah Dines MP:

“That the Community and Environment Committee be recommended to undertake a period of consultation for use of the following as temporary gypsy and traveller sites: Car Park at Old Station Close, Rowsley Car Park at Fishpond Meadows, Ashbourne Matlock Bath Station Car Park and Temple Walk Car Park (to be consulted on for use on a temporary basis during the winter months)”

This from the report from our District Councillor: *At this following meeting we were presented with the outcome of the review and to my utter amazement I saw that three of the eight sites reviewed were located in Matlock Bath:*

- Artist corner car park
- Station car park
- Temple car park

And finally from the email from Robert Cogings – Director of housing:

“The Temple Road site was added to the list at the request of the Ward Member for Matlock Bath and an assessment of that site against the established criteria then took place.”

As Temple Road car park was not even on the list of sites visited by the working group, why is it now being considered. Apart from affecting the parking situation in the village it is adjacent to the village school and the car park is the main pedestrian access to the school and also used as a car drop off point. When the traveller family were last on this site, there were incidents which necessitated the police being called, defecating on other parts of the public car park and problems with the school not being able to use part of their important outside area. On these grounds alone this site should be removed from the list. It is also close to residential properties on Clifton Road and Temple Road. Are we again going to be in a situation where DDDC know of the problems that using Temple Road car park as a tolerated site this will cause to the village but will consider allowing it to happen.

In summary, Matlock Bath has suffered the effects of having the traveller family housed in the village for more than an extended period of time and demand that arrangements are made to move them out of the village.

Matlock Bath Parish Council”

Letter from Cathy Wells, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“Dear Sirs,

I am writing as a voice of Matlock Bath, a village that has been more than accommodating, but now finds itself at the receiving end of a situation that is spiralling out of control.

The Travellers' presence in our village has led to a series of unfortunate incidents. Antisocial behaviour, including defecating on pathways, aggressive confrontations with locals, visitors, and business owners, leaving rubbish, and fly-tipping, has become a common occurrence. This is not only a public nuisance but also a health and safety hazard. The noise from the constant shouting from one of the Travellers

in particular is ridiculous along with their dogs barking, the leaf blower on until late at night and their generators running through the night.

We now hear that you are considering moving the Travellers from the Railway to the Temple Car Park. I cannot fathom how this could be a sensible consideration given its proximity to a primary school. The last time the Travellers were there there were numerous issues involving aggressive shouting towards the school children, dogs being on the loose and one of the Travellers exposing himself.

The financial implications are significant. The cost of clean-ups, provision of portaloos, which are not being used as intended, and the loss of revenue from car park spaces and coaches that have refused to come or can't park, is a burden on our taxpayers. I requested a FOI report regarding this matter and apparently the Council does not record the costs for the Matlock Bath encampment separately nor could they tell me the cost of the time spent dealing with the matter specifically. What they were able to tell me was that for around £128k had been spent on portaloos, wheeled bin charges and 'general expenses'. This doesn't even take into account the cost of the visits to the sites, reports spent on proposed sites etc etc all of which have been a waste of time. In a climate where we are constantly hearing about budgetary cuts and bankrupt councils, surely this is money that could be better spent on improving local services and amenities.

For years, the council has failed to resolve this issue. We are tired of hearing blame being passed onto previous administrations. We need action, not excuses. The recent report into the fiasco at Hasker Farm made it clear that there is a requirement for transparency, yet it still feels lacking.

The meeting on the 30th of May was a prime example of this lack of transparency. There was no specific information that the Travellers' subject would not be debated, just a vague announcement that because of the general election some topics couldn't be discussed. There was no indication that the public could still attend and still speak at that meeting.

We have been told repeatedly that the council has received no complaints or objections from the residents of Matlock Bath about the Travellers' situation. This is simply not true. I personally have emails dating back over 2 years raising issues to a number of Council members including Gary Purdy, Steve Flitter, Tim Braund to name a few. In the same FOI report I asked for the number of complaints received by the council in relation to the Travellers at Matlock Bath and was given a figure of 35. So who is saying that there have been no complaints?

It is concerning that while the Traveller Working Group is made up of cross-party representatives, there is nobody on there who lives in Matlock or Matlock Bath. This lack of representation is troubling and makes us fear that when the time comes to vote for where the travellers will end up, our interests will not be adequately represented.

Ultimately, as a council, you have failed in your duty and have been allowed to do so without consequence. Had this been the private sector, there would have been

disciplinary action and potentially dismissals for the lack of results and obscene waste of funds time and time again.

It is time that you listened to the views of the residents and businesses of Matlock Bath and stopped using us as a dumping ground for your problem. We urge you to take immediate action to resolve this issue in a fair and transparent manner.

Thank you for your time.”

Statement from Jo-Ann Wildgoose, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“I write yet again with my objection to the Travellers moving back to Old Station Close Car Park at Rowsley.

This is not a suitable site for a Traveller family, the car park is relied upon by small local businesses and visitors to the area. There is no other provision for Parking Rowsley.

The site is a car park and as said by Steve Flitter, leader of the DDDC- Car parks are not an appropriate place for a traveller site. Yet here we are again. Its absolutely ludicrous!!

Its time Rowsley was taken off the agenda as a Traveller site.

IT IS NOT SUITABLE

Mrs Jo-Ann Wildgoose”

Statement from William Jones , Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

I wish to formally register my opposition to any sites Matlock Bath being considered as a permanent one for the travellers currently on the station car park.

This site was provided on the basis that they would stay for 9weeks, 18 months later they are still there & it appears that nothing constructive is being done by the council to remove them.

Matlock Bath is an important tourist destination & is not suitable for a permanent site.

Regards
W.Jones

Statement from Denise Brown, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“Dear Sir/Chair

I would like to comment on the agenda item regarding the Temporary Tolerated Traveller site proposed in Ashbourne. I am aware this has been removed from the agenda for now due to the pre election period but would like my comments noted.

I object strongly to the proposed site of the Fishpond Meadow Car Park. This car park has previously been considered and then deemed unsuitable. Nothing has changed. It has been agreed that the car park could be used by Ashbourne Reborn Project for a compound for the project workers and contractors. This would compromise the whole project if it became a traveller site. The car park is in the middle of a residential area. Houses on Park Avenue, back on to the site and Lakeside flats, Shaw Croft flats & Chatsworth Court apartments are all within a few yards of the car park. The residents will suffer. Shaw Croft Car Park is opposite and is where the majority of residents and any visitors to the town park. Bearing in mind the Learning Difficulty of one of the travellers, does the committee think that a busy, noisy area is appropriate for him. When they were sited on Ashbourne's Clifton Road Car park, the area was busy and this caused the gentleman with the LD, great distress which in turn impacted on his whole family. Surely the committee can't condone this happening again? I am certain the committee do not want to be responsible for igniting tension between the travellers and locals, as the site will surely cause both parties huge problems. Ashbourne Reborn are about to commence works to enhance and rejuvenate the town, a traveller sight on one of the main routes in and through the town would be an eyesore. DDDC closed this car park as it is prone to flooding and even a short stay car park would have experienced problems of vehicles becoming bogged down. Is the DDC saying that travellers homes don't matter? Why would that be the case? I urge the committee to adhere to the previous decision made, that the car park is not suitable. I suggest the site is visited by the committee, prior to this being discussed on a future agenda, so those Councillors who are not remotely familiar with the Fishpond Meadow Car Park, might see firsthand the idiocy of the suggestion of this site for travellers.

Regards

Denise Brown"

**Statement from Ann Barlow, Local Resident regarding Item 5;
Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group**

"I am writing on behalf of my mother who lives on shawcroft.last time they came we had music blaring out .the dog barking day and night .the young lad sitting in the van pipping the [horn.it](#) is a walkway through the carpark which is used day in day out.travellers travel so keep them moving."

Statement from Mr & Mrs Lees, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“As you will see from the address we live directly across from the proposed site.

We were living here the last time they were here , unsociable behavior, noise are only two problems they caused, it's enough having traffic outside the living room window for 6 plus hours a day without the disruption they caused.

Maybe you should look outside the town centre, maybe the airfield industrial site.

Please rethink.

Mrs Glenis Lees and Mr William Lees”

Statement from Richard Wells, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“Dear Council Members,

I write to you as one of the residents of Matlock Bath, a village that has shown immense patience but is now at its wit's end due to your chronic mismanagement and indifference.

The presence of Travellers in our village has escalated into a dire situation. We are experiencing antisocial behaviour, including public defecation, aggressive confrontations with locals, visitors, and business owners, rampant littering, and fly-tipping. This is not just a public nuisance; it is a severe health and safety hazard. The incessant noise from shouting, bonfires, loud music, barking dogs, late-night leaf blowers, and all-night generator use is unbearable. Matlock Bath is a natural amphitheatre which amplifies this noise all the way up the Holme Road, Masson Road, Brentwood etc.

Now, we hear you are considering moving the Travellers from the Railway to the Temple Car Park, near a primary school. This idea is reckless. The last time the Travellers were there, we endured aggressive shouting at schoolchildren, loose dogs, polluting a pond which was teeming with newts and frogs and one Traveller even exposing himself.

The financial burden is staggering. Costs for clean-ups, provision of portaloos (which are misused), and lost revenue from disrupted parking are falling on the taxpayers. Businesses are suffering significantly from this.

For years, the Council has failed to address this issue. We are tired of excuses and blame-shifting. We demand action. The recent report on the Hasker Farm debacle highlighted a need for transparency, which remains glaringly absent.

The May 30th meeting exemplified this. A vague announcement about the general election prevented crucial discussions. There was no clarity on whether the public could attend and speak, further eroding trust. Obviously the meeting time at 18.00 will be difficult for anyone working in the private sector as they will be commuting back from work - I do wonder if this time was selected on purpose ?

Contrary to your claims, residents have lodged numerous complaints about the Travellers' situation. I have personal emails (probably in the 100s) dating back over years to Council members, including Gary Purdy, Steve Flitter, Tim Braund and many more 99% of which are complaints. An FOI request confirmed 35 complaints, yet you falsely state there have been none.

Matlock Bath is meant to be a Derbyshire dales beauty spot attracting visitors from all over the UK - **this is not the case now !** Taking to visitors recently they think that Matlock Bath is 'a dump !' And specifically mentioned the Travellers on the station car park - shouting obscenities, dumping old gas cylinders and tipping rubbish, actually block the entrance of the walk to Lovers Walk, barricading the carpark off and making them feel uncomfortable and threatened !.

It is alarming that the Traveller Working Group lacks any representation from Matlock or Matlock Bath. This lack of local input makes us fear that our concerns will be ignored when decisions are made. **MATLOCK BATH HAS HAD MORE THAN ITS SHARE OF THE TRAVELLERS.**

Your failure to address this issue is a gross dereliction of duty. In the private sector, such incompetence would result in disciplinary action or dismissals. It is high time you listened to the residents and businesses of Matlock Bath. We demand immediate and fair action to resolve this ongoing crisis.

Enough is enough. Act now.

Sincerely,

R WELLS

One of the frustrated and angry residents of Matlock Bath”

Statement from Amy Kirkland, Local Resident regarding Item 5; Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group

“Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express our strong opposition to the proposals for a permanent traveller encampment in Matlock Bath, and to ask when the current camp is likely to be moved out of the village.

Matlock Bath has borne the brunt of the traveller situation for well over a year now, and on and off for many years. The site where they currently are (station car park) is entirely unsuitable, for the following reasons:

- It reduces the car parking for tourism, affecting village businesses
- Coaches are unwilling to park there and leave their coaches (and there is not enough space for them) meaning huge loss of revenue for local attractions
- The Lover's Walk footpath has become completely unusable – as a family we used to regularly walk this path and it is now covered in human waste (excrement and toilet paper) and the travellers are intimidating in terms of access, at one point even closing off the path and claiming it was theirs
- The noise from the group (constant shouting including swearing) is relentless

I understand that the Temple Road car park has not been ruled out as a permanent location – this absolutely cannot be considered as a suitable location, given the proximity to the primary school! Last time the travellers were on this car park, there were numerous incidents including many reported to the police, including 2 of indecent exposure to minors. Surely even given the level of incompetence in dealing with this issue for so many years, such a situation cannot be created again? The local ponds had to be drained of petrol and excrement, at a cost of thousands to the local taxpayers, and the harm to the local environment was awful. Young lads from the traveller camp regularly intimidate young girls working in the local shops, waiting outside for them to finish work so they can 'walk them home' and then accusing them of racism when their offers are refused. Kids had to stop walking to school through the temple car park as it was so intimidating to walk through dogs straining at leashes and comments from those camped there. The playground had to be closed to children (their own school play ground!!) due to the constant swearing and shouting, including regular use of the C*** word – I absolutely understand that the man in question cannot help this, however you can make a decision that this is not the right behaviour to expose primary age children to all day, every day in what should be a safe space.

I could go on, but I know that you have had numerous complaints from villagers and local businesses.

If proposals for a permanent site here in the village go ahead, they will be met with strong and continued opposition from all those who live here. I hope that after years of us bearing the brunt of this issue, we will finally be listened to.

Yours sincerely,

Amy

Amy Kirkland”

**Statement from Helen Williams, Local Resident regarding Item 5;
Recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group**

“Dear

I am writing to express my concern at the location of the proposed Traveller Site at the Fish Pond carpark in Ashbourne

I appreciate that there is a need to find a permanent site, but this location is not suitable due to being too close to residential buildings and a walkway for children at the local schools.

In addition this area floods considerably and would not be a nice or safe location for any family to live.

Please keep me updated on this application

Kind regards
Helen Williams

ASHBOURNE RESIDENT”