

New Age Traveller - Action updates 2024-10-18

1. **Action 18:** *Provide an update on Judicial Review into Club Mill Road New Age Traveller encampment.*
 - 1.1. No Judicial Review was issued by the New Age Travellers, it was a threat of Judicial Review. The Council agreed to withdraw/not pursue the Notice to Leave whilst the Council carried out further considerations, no Court proceedings were issued. That remains the case. The Council have had no communication from the New Age Travellers solicitors since then, January 2024.
2. **Action 19:** *Confirm if the suitability appraisal of the Club Mill Road New Age Traveller encampment is publicly available*
 - 2.1. The Council can provide a written update on the appraisal of the encampment: Club Mill Road encampment is located on a public cycle and footpath, and is susceptible to adverse weather conditions and flooding, and on occasions the adjacent River Don has come very close to submerging the footpath the New Age Travellers are located on.
 - 2.2. It is known and visible that sections of the nearby banking have eroded away, which is some distance from the caravans, however it remains a concern therefore regular visits are undertaken by the Council to assess the site.
 - 2.3. The Council have determined the encampment is not suitable for Travellers to reside on and when the opportunity presents itself, the Council remind those present it is not a suitable location to occupy.
3. **Action 20:** *GTAA Include letter referred to in the GTAA and Written Statements WS3/1 from New Age Travellers at Club Mill Road wishing to stay in Sheffield to the Examination Library*
 - 3.1. Document '2019 New Age Traveller letter to the Council' provided.
4. **Action 21:** *Confirm reasoning why household formation rate not applied to New Age Traveller families*
 - 4.1. The 1.98% household formation rate was not applied to New Age Travellers due to the older age structure of the community (when compared to Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople). The household formation rate is often applied because of children and information gathered through on-site engagement from the Council Environmental Protection Service and Housing Solutions Team, does evidence that children are on the site.

To whom it may concern.

We the undersigned former residents of Parkwood Springs Traveller site currently residing temporarily on Club Mill Road following our eviction write to you to request accommodation provision be made for us.

Our group comprises of those for whom bricks and mortar housing is unsuitable accommodation. Many of our group have lived in trucks and trailers for decades and this is our way of life. Some of our group have illnesses, disabilities, neurodiverse conditions and/or mental health conditions that make house dwelling unsuitable for our needs and a risk to our health and well-being. Some of us travel for work at festivals and fairs and need a base to come and go from and to spend the winter residing on when the weather is too harsh to travel but because of this line of work cannot sustain rental housing which would be left vacant and unpaid for for many weeks and even months of the year. Others are unable to travel due to suffering ill health, disability, awaiting medical assessments and/or have children in local schools or home education groups, some have undertaken local employment in order to survive because of these mitigating factors. All are again unable to adapt to living in bricks and mortar housing as living a Traveller way of life is either what we are used to or what fulfils our needs. Travellers should not be forced into houses due to circumstances outside of our control that prevent us from travelling for work as we once did.

Our group are a community and a family, some of us having lived and travelled together for up to 30 years, all of us relying upon each other as a support network. If one of our group needs food others will provide for them with what little we have. If one of our group needs physical support, chopping wood or maintaining a vehicle, others provide it. If one of our group needs emotional or mental health support others are there to listen and give their company when it is out of hours for normal services of this kind and when the person who is struggling is beyond asking for help outside of our community. To separate us from our community would be to remove this support and leave us vulnerable and at risk.

We therefore write to you to request accommodation of a different nature to that which has been offered to date. Offering us details of emergency shelters or council housing waiting lists is unsuitable and ignores our way of life and reasons for it. We collectively need a permanent site to park the trucks and trailers that are our much loved homes and to live together with our community. During the court case a need for a site for us was

identified by the Judge and a council representative agreed to this need and said in court that 7 potential sites had been identified by the council. When the Judge asked about these sites in a later hearing the council representative said that out of the 7 potential sites that had been identified by the council the site provision consultation had deemed 5 of these sites unsuitable and the council had sold off the other 2 to private investors since the previous court date. We would like to ask the council why, when the need to provide a site for us had been identified and agreed, would the council sell off sites that had been earmarked as potential solutions for the problem created when the council decided to evict us from the site previously resided upon by our community for the last 15 years? We would like to ask what further attempts have been made to find us an alternative site that is deemed suitable for our needs? We would like to add at this point that we are a self sustaining ecological community that runs on solar power and can build our own composting toilets that meet ecological and hygiene standards. We can and do dispose of our own waste and recycling and collect our own water. We have few needs that could be considered a provision required for accommodating us. We simply require and request land upon which we can park without being moved on.

We would also like to draw attention to the fact that caravan site provision is made by the council for Irish Travellers in Sheffield. We feel that the recognition of need for this type of accommodation for one group and the provision of this for that group but not for our group is discriminatory upon the grounds of our country of origin. If an English council makes provision for Irish Travellers it should also make provision for English Travellers as nobody should be discriminated against due to their nationality.

The councils displacement of our group is not an issue that is going to go away. We have moved location and as we have received notice to vacate this site and warning of imminent court proceedings if our request for a permanent site is ignored once again we only have one option, to relocate to another unauthorised site around the city. If every time we relocate the council take us to court this is sure to be an increasing drain on tax payers money which could be better served by providing a site for us. We are sure that the city's tax payers would prefer the council provide us with an official site than to turn up on their streets as this is what many of them tell us. We have a lot of support in our request that the council provide us with a site from Sheffield residents and many have told us they feel it is "disgraceful" that the council displaced us from such a long standing site without provision of alternative accommodation suitable to our way of life.


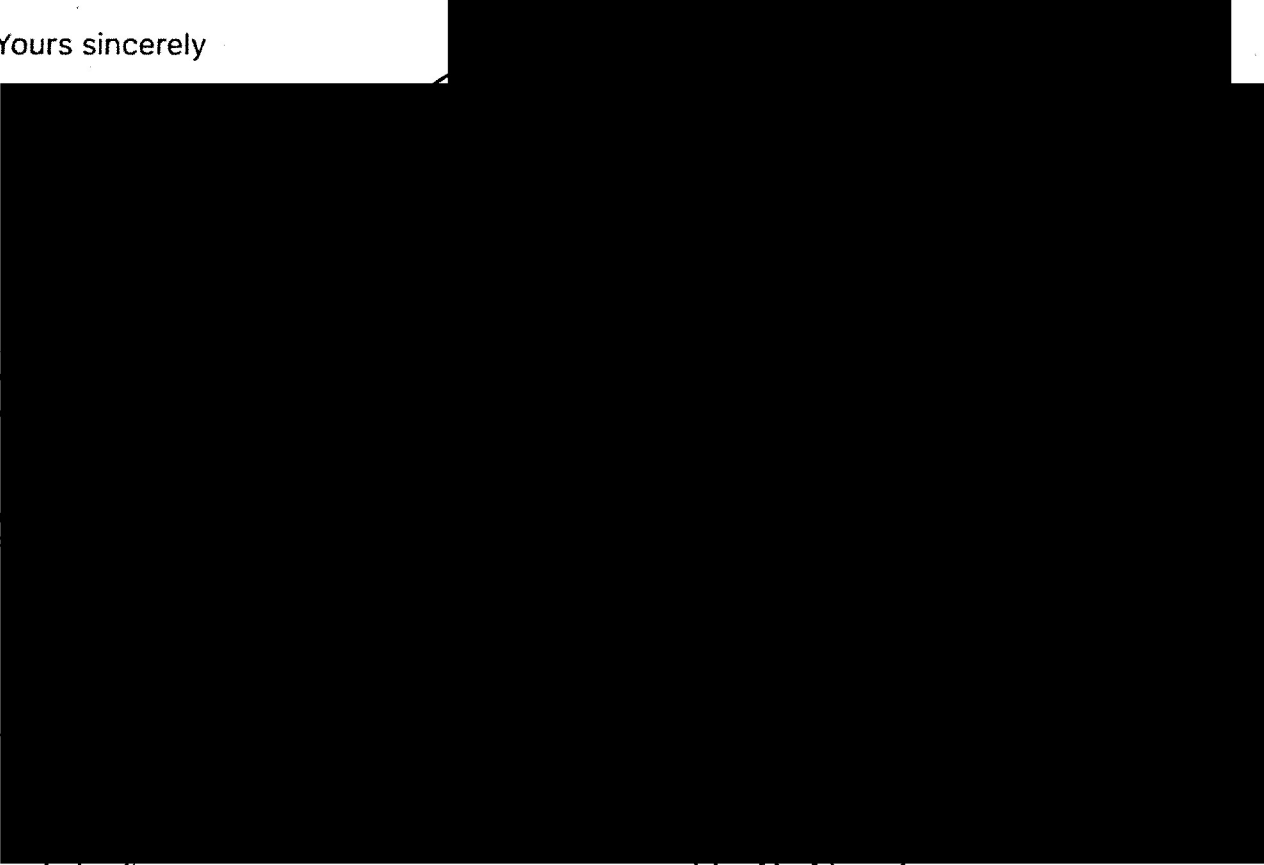
The nature of a Travelling way of life means that not all of our group were present on the Parkwood Springs site at the commencement of the previous court case. Those people

away for work or other travel at that time have not been given the opportunity to give their reasons for requiring accommodation provision. The letter we received dated 30'th of August 2019 that requests this information gives just 7 days to provide proof of "1) any disability/ physical health problems/ reduced mobility/ age related health issues etc" (and 2, the needs, disability, physical or mental health issues of any under 18's in our community. Our solicitor informs us that medical letters are required for this and I'm sure you are aware as is the situation of waiting times to see a GP let alone a specialist in the city 7 days does not give us anywhere near the time we would need to even get an appointment in order to request such information. We therefore request sufficient time in order to adequately fulfil this request.

We would like to end our letter with the government definition of what constitutes a "Traveller";

"Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily. "

Yours sincerely



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