

From: David Willetts [REDACTED]  
Subject: Re: Travellers on Donnington recreation ground.  
Date: 23 July 2022 a  
To: Steve Masters [REDACTED]

DW

That's interesting Steve. I have always admired calmness under pressure and diplomacy is always preferable to agitation and anger. What is the source and nature of the criticism? Working together is so much better than sniping at one or the other.

I am well aware of the need for caution when expressing concern for the Travellers, especially the children. Feelings can run high locally, not least because of the tragedy of the death of P C Harper. However stigmatising a distinctive social group achieves nothing and simply exports a perceived problem from one parish to the next.

Speak soon. Take care.

ATB

David

Sent from my iPhone

On 23 Jul 2022, at 22:36, Steve Masters [REDACTED] wrote:

Hi David,

My email summary to the Parish council.

It has been a tough 24 hrs where I have had some criticism about my calm and diplomatic approach to this issue and it has frustrated me in no small measure.

I thank you for your advice and council on these and other matters, it means a lot to having you available when I need guidance.

Best wishes

Steve M

----- Forwarded m [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]:29

Subject: Re: Travellers on Donnington recreation ground.

To: Gillian Durrant [REDACTED]

[REDACTED], Bill Graham [REDACTED], Mar [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED], Colin Yates [REDACTED], Margo Payne [REDACTED]  
Anthony Harris [REDACTED], Glyn Thomas [REDACTED], Paul Bryant [REDACTED]

Good evening everyone,

I'm sure many of you may have been to the recreation ground today.

I went and once again had conversations with a number of the travellers.

Again they suggested they would be departing tomorrow.

I also spoke to one of the police patrols who are monitoring the site and they echoed that they had been told the plan was to leave tomorrow.

I walked around the site and can report that the pavilion and the mower garage appear unmolested.

Litter levels were less than I feared and a number black bags full of rubbish were seen at the bins and by the caravans. In fact levels of selfish littering were far higher at northcroft last week when people were swimming in the river.

Children continue to play in the playpark and castle, indeed two adults told kids to play sensibly while I was there.

I spoke to a couple of dog walkers who said they had had no aggressive interactions and that the family groups seem to be reasonable and friendly.

I dearly hope that we see them move on tomorrow so we can get back to normal and also to dispel the negative stereotyping that seems to be the prevailing narrative in some quarters.

I was thinking about future security measures and a high restricted barrier maybe something to look at.

Finally. I have been a little perturbed by the suggestion online by my political rivals that I am in some way complicit and

encouraging this illegal encampment.

While I may not use the inflammatory language of Cllrs MacKinnon and Doherty I am trying to ensure a speedy resolution without enflaming already strained tensions between residents and the traveller community in West Berkshire. This approach seems to be one the police wish to follow.

Anyway, I bid you good night and will be at the recreation ground again tomorrow.

Best wishes,

Steve Masters

On Fri, 22 Jul 2022, 13:54 Gillian Durrant, <[clerk@shawcumdonnington.org.uk](mailto:clerk@shawcumdonnington.org.uk)> wrote:

Thanks Steve

I have spoken to Jean Pimley - the Traveller Liaison officer at WBC. She said our best bet was for the police to move them on, but after what you have said it looks like they wont be, despite having more powers now to do this. Bill confirms they did break in, so I will try and speak to the police and find out if we can persuade them to act.

If the police wont act then we need to - but as you say, only if they are still there on Monday morning. I have the contact details of bailiffs who Jean recommends, and I will put them on notice now, but if we do need to use them on Monday there will of course be a cost.

An alternative is to engage lawyers and take it to court, but this could take several weeks.

Once they are gone we need to immediately tighten up security. As a temporary measure we can borrow some concrete blocks from WBC, but these are kept at Theale and we would need to transport them at our own expense, but the loan is free of charge. This of course may be a problem for the cricket club! Ideally we need to look at the existing gate and lock and get something more robust ASAP.

**We will have a Zoom meeting to discuss this today at 5.30pm for those who can make it.**

Gillian Durrant is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Shaw-cum-Donnington Parish Council emergency meeting

Time: Jul 22, 2022 05:30 PM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/77328471435?pwd=zvTG02daG-2OgO1OXkMWTWVPjKxhAv.1>

Meeting ID: 773 2847 1435

Passcode: SSQ9YG

Kind regards

Gillian Durrant

Parish Clerk

Shaw-cum-Donnington Parish Council

Mobile: [REDACTED]

Email: [clerk@shawcumdonnington.org.uk](mailto:clerk@shawcumdonnington.org.uk)

**Please note: I work a limited number of hours for the Parish Council, so there may be a delay in responses.**

On 22/07/2022 13:30 Steve Masters [REDACTED] wrote:

Good afternoon everyone,

An update on the recreation ground.

The police seem to be of the opinion that they are contained at present and not causing any material damage or risk so the have little grounds to move them on at this time, now that may change and there is an incident number INC 698 22/07/22 raised.

As the land is Parish land it is the PC who will have to instigate any proceedings to evict should it come to that.

I liaised with the police and the travellers who have said they intend to move on by Sunday evening. Clearly we have to take them at their word at current time.

I would however recommend a Zoom meeting of the PC to have an outline plan in place should they remain on the recreation ground after Sunday.

The gentleman Bill and I spoke to has made the assurance to me as well as to the police and Bill that they will treat the area with respect and move on.

I also made it explicitly clear that if they do remain longer than they have outlined legal action will be taken by the Parish Council.

I'm happy to set up the Zoom if we have a time you can meet.

In the meantime I will drop by the recreation ground periodically to ensure I am aware of the situation and can ensure they are respecting the site.

Best wishes

Steve Masters