

ROWSLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Sian Bacon

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MINUTES

For the Extraordinary Meeting held on Tuesday 23rd July 2024 in the WI Room at Rowsley Village Hall.

Councillors present: Jo Wildgoose, Victoria Friend, Kevin Rowney, Robert Hockley
Apologies: Cllr Kath Potter
Others: Sian Bacon (Clerk)

PART 1 – NON CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

*Report / Action
Required
Approved*

- 1. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Potter
- 2. There were no interests declared
- 3. Public Participation –

Noted

- Cllr Friend gave a brief summary of the meeting at the DDDC and reported that the motion had passed to move to a consultation for 8 weeks on the 6 proposed sites including Rowsley Old Station Close car park. Cllr Friend reported that in addition to the consultation there will be public meetings in each location proposed that will be open to all.
- A resident raised that they felt there was not enough pushing of the protection of the river and wildlife. The Haddon River Keeper noted that he had sent information to the DDDC.
- A resident queried what will happen if permission is granted. It was reported that the Matlock bath family will move from the coach park and take up residence on the site. It was noted that there are several caravans to one family and this family have been in the Derbyshire Dales for the longest. However the family do not wish to be at Rowsley as previously stated by them. The District Council is still looking for a permanent site which they have be legally obliged to have since 2012 but they are no nearer gaining a permanent site than they were 12 years ago therefore temporary has no meaning. There is no guarantee a site will be found quickly and Cllr Hobson has had no answer from the officers at DDDC on a time frame to find a site or how long the Travellers would be staying.
- It was queried what had happened last time the Travellers were at Rowsley and whether the DDDC will make them go if there are problems. It was noted that last time the family had left of their own accord after 8 months.
- It was queried why the site was on the list if the family are not wanting to attend this site and left of their own accord last time. It was reported that there is not much land owned by the DDDC and a longer list of sites were each removed after going through the traffic light criteria.
- Cllr Hobson reported that she was a part of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group but that the group is toxic and when the list came out, she highlighted that it was not correct but the group is pushing Rowsley anyway. The information used makes Rowsley look like the best place for the Travellers, but the information used was wrong. Furthermore, the Working Group has not attended all the sites, and the Community and Environment Committee councillors haven't visited the sites.
- It was noted that the reported size of the carpark is not the space the Travellers will take up and last time they took up a large area. On Friday morning a photo was taken that showed the car park practically full with 39 cars parked there. Cllr Hobson noted that there will be an impact on business and rubbish in the river. The car park is also the only safe point to use the trail she noted that all points these points were made last night at the DDDC meeting by several residents and Councillors.
- Cllr Friend noted that according to the shortlist Rowsley is the favourite site. The DDDC want the Travellers out of Matlock Bath and Matlock is not an option as the families don't get on. The Arc is oversubscribed and close to residents so is not a serious candidate. Middleton is a possibility but just a field and Hopton is exposed and small. Therefore, Rowsley faces an uphill struggle to stop the site coming to the car park.
- The Holmesford site and Tansley site were raised, and it was reported that the Tansley site surveys had found that the land was contaminated. Holmesford is back on the market, and they reportedly want to sell DDDC.
- It was suggested that the Council help the DDDC find somewhere else and push the Homesford site. It was also recommended that all residents go online to the consultation

Chairman's Signature Date.....

and fill it in and send Cllr Hobson emails which will be sent to all the DDDC Councillors. A leaflet drop with consultation details on will be done by the Parish Council. It was noted that the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group was flawed and had not gone through due process.

- The Council were asked for their best three points against the proposals which are the businesses with 48 people employed will be harmed by the Travellers blocking off the car park. The site is the end of the cycle trail which is well visited and it's removal from use will compromise safety forcing families with kids into road if can't be used. The trail is also supposed to be extended bringing more users who won't be able to access it. And thirdly the fact that the river is adjacent means the site could harm wildlife and result in rubbish in the river. The village has previous history with this site and there are vulnerable people who use it and live close by.
- It was stated that the DDDC have used Rowsley as a dumping ground for years as it is a small community with one councillor.
- Cllr Hobson reported that the previous working party back in November 2022 decided none of sites were suitable. Then the election comes and by September 2023 the Council have circled back around and rescinded the decision of 2022. Cllr Hobson doesn't believe this is lawful as the motion has not been properly rescinded.
- A resident reported that they use Matlock train station and it is surrounded by caravans by the end of the day which makes it feel unsafe. It was noted that the initial criteria for a site is that it is District Council owned land and there is a criteria that each site has been judged by but Rowsley's information is wrong.
- A resident stated that some officials at DDDC want the site here. The Woodyard site has planning permission for 8 pitches and they are desperate to sell it but certain officials aren't willing to buy the site.
- Cllr Friend reported that she wrote to the CEO of DDDC asking about Holmesford and was told that the Councillors have to tell the officers what to do about the site. It meets the set criteria and the site is suitable. It was agreed to look at getting an independent report on the site with the owners permission and Cllr Hobson will find the previous site report the DDDC did.
- It was noted that residents can correct the spreadsheet as part of their consultation submissions.
- A resident raised that the antisocial behaviour is awful though it was noted that the DDDC have legal duty to house these families. A resident had asked at last night's meeting how the DDDC will control the bad behaviour and was told that Police reports are made then the CPS make the decision to not prosecute. It was queried then who is going to enforce the required code of conduct and it was noted that not every adult Traveller has to sign it just the heads of households.
- A resident noted that they had gone through the criteria and noted errors.
- It was noted that the site can support them as they have been here before but the village suffers from the impact on traffic and how they live.
- A resident raised that the car park is full all the time now and that previously the Travellers tried to stop people using trail.
- Cllr Friend reported that the Level centre has parking spaces as part of their agreement with DDDC and to remove these would be disadvantaging disabled children.
- A Petition has been done and handed in last night. A Group email will be set up via the rowsleyparishcouncil email address.
- The Consultation will run for 8 weeks and the Clerk will send the link to those who email her for the consultation. It will also be on the Consultation tab on the DDDC website.
- A resident queried why the Travellers are being moved from Matlock Bath. And it was noted that they had been there for 4 years with the towns only Coach car park being occupied by them.
- It was reported that the Ashbourne site had received levelling up money so the Fishpond car park will be full of diggers making it not viable.
- It was noted that the DDDC have failed to sort this issue over the last 20-30 years and have employed a consultancy firm which expects to take 2 years to find a site.
- It was felt that Rowsley have done their time already
- It was noted that there is a container on site for the High Tor players who couldn't get access to this last time the Travellers were there.
- The Councillors recommended that all residents respond with personal stories about the impact this will have on them. Cllr Friend will put together a leaflet with the main points to use when completing the consultation which will be delivered to the village. A resident offered to leaflet the new estate.
- Cllr Hobson reported that she had leafleted visitors to the car park the last time the site was considered, and they had responded so this would be encouraged again.
- Volunteers to deliver the leaflets were asked to contact the Clerk.
- A resident raised that some of the anti-social behaviour one member of from this family had included flashing children in the past and it was noted that this is potentially a danger so near a school. In particular because school children cycle to school on the trail

and parents regularly bring young children past the site. It was agreed to measure the distance from the site to the school.

- Cllr Hobson will push the fact that the current process is wrong and dodgy.
- It was reported that as of yet the Council don't know what questions will be asked on consultation. It was noted that Homesford would be a permanent site and save time and effort. The Travellers want to be in Ashbourne but there are no sites there as the Fishpond site will be used to put all municipal vehicles there for levelling up works. It was noted that the Fishpond site is not suitable either. It was noted that if the DDDC have a site they will have fulfilled their legal obligation and that will be where the Travellers will need to go.
- Cllr Friend reported that at present Rowsley Parish Council is supposed to be six people but has a vacancy. She raised that the Council does a lot of work and if anyone wants to they should please do so and do their bit for the community. A resident noted that the Parish Council has done a lot of work over the years.
- A resident queried if the council knew how many brown sites are currently available. Cllr Hobson agreed to find out.
- Thanks were given to the resident who had gone door to door with the petition and collected 306 signatures. The petition was handed in to the DDDC last night.

4. There were no items on the agenda to exclude members of the press and public in order to discuss the following item under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings Act 1960).
5. To discuss the Parish Council's response to the District Council Community and Environment Committee Traveller proposals.

It was agreed that the Parish Council will leaflet the village with the top reasons the site is not viable and the consultation details. This will allow residents to respond to the consultation effectively. Cllr Friend will talk to the local businesses about putting together an independent report on the Woodyard site. An email list will be put together by the Parish Clerk through the Parish Council email address to send information to all those who sign up.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS - All meetings held at 7.30pm in the Village Hall - MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND:

- Monday 29th July 2024
- Monday 16th September 2024
- Monday 25th November 2024