

HUNTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH GYPSIES OR OTHER TRAVELLING COMMUNITY INVADING COUNCIL LAND (as adopted 6th January 2015)

The parish council acknowledges that, as a land owner, there is a risk of a travelling community accessing such land without permission. The parish council is aware, from the experiences of other local councils and communities, that in these circumstances, prompt action is essential in order to reduce the amount of damage to land and minimize the financial impact.

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that fast action can be taken in order to protect the council's assets and minimize its costs, whilst maintaining communication within the council at all times.

In producing this procedure, the council fully understands that the potential costs of such an issue are substantial and could have a catastrophic effect on the council's funds. Its primary policy is therefore to do everything within its powers to prevent such activity from occurring by ensuring all access points are secured and surrounding fences and hedges are well maintained and repaired / replaced when necessary.

Procedure

1. The parish council will ensure that all vehicular gates to the allotments and recreation ground will be locked, with access restricted to a limited number of councillors or residents as necessary
2. All parish councillors will be vigilant, in particular with regard to inappropriate activity on or around the allotments or recreation ground.
3. The parish council will seek the assistance of local residents in the vicinity of the allotments and recreation ground, to notify the council if they notice anything that could reasonably be deemed gypsy or traveller activity.
4. Upon discovery of any unauthorised entry to parish council land, a councillor will advise both the Clerk and the Chairman of the council (or in his absence, the Vice Chairman). This can be done by telephone for expediency but should be confirmed in writing via email, for completeness.
5. The Chairman, or Vice Chairman will, subject to there being no perceived personal danger, visit the location to advise those present that if they do not vacate immediately, legal measures will be taken.
6. The Clerk will seek immediate advice from an appropriate bailiff company, with a view to arranging the removal of the travellers at the earliest opportunity.
7. In line with financial regulations, the Clerk will, with the agreement of the Chairman, or in his absence, the Vice chairman, instruct the Bailiff company to act on behalf of the council.
8. The Clerk will provide regular updates to councillors via email, including, but not limited to, actions as advised by the Bailiffs, time-scales and committed expenditure.
9. A summary of the issues, actions and costs will be included for discussion at the next scheduled parish council meeting.
10. This procedure will be reviewed immediately after any necessity to use it.

Reference: Parish Council Meeting 7th October 2014.
Parish Council meeting 6th January 2015 Item 7(f)