

## Theale Parish Council

### **Summary of letter to West Berkshire Council**

**Date: 1<sup>st</sup> June 2018**

**Subject: Traveller Incursions**

**To: West Berkshire Council**

I am writing on behalf of the parish council with regards to the traveller situation in Theale.

It would appear that the police in this area are even more reluctant to take any steps to deal with travellers than in previous years. This is a matter the parish council will need to take up with the Police and Crimes Commissioner not the district council but it does mean that it is even more important for land owners to be proactive in protecting their land from incursion.

As I know you are aware, Theale residents are very angry that the public open space in Woodfield Way was not secured, by WBC, against a further incursion once the first set of travellers had left. The small number of travellers that were evicted from Woodfield Way during the second incursion moved straight on to the land at Meadow Way, another WBC site and no one removed them.

This particular site at Meadow Way is on a flood plain, the neighbouring houses are built on stilts as the area was previously a water meadow, hence the travellers wheel spinning and getting stuck when it rained yesterday. WBC has reported that travellers were removed from Pipers Way in Thatcham almost immediately because the area was prone to flooding – why was the same level of service not given to the residents bordering this site in Theale?

**The parish council strongly urges West Berkshire Council to have in place measures that will be taken *immediately* these sites are eventually vacated, measures that will ensure a robust solution to preventing further illegal incursions.**

The behaviour of the travellers in Theale over the past few weeks has been especially bad. The impact on the local community has been huge and feelings are understandably running high.

The parish council is aware of how costly and time consuming preventing illegal incursions can be – we have spent hours and hours so far this year working on preventative measures to stop travellers from getting onto parish council land – but the man hours and financial costs of court hearings and cleaning up operations are substantial and it is money wasted on just trying to get back to the position you were in before the travellers arrived, there is no overall improvement. Money spent now on putting robust measures such as earth bunds in place is money invested in the community, not money wasted on dealing with the aftermath of those who are just passing through.

The parish council would be keen to hear about any plans WBC may have to protect the residents of Theale from suffering illegal incursions like this in the future.

Signed: Jo Friend, Clerk to Theale Parish Council