

## **Wirksworth Town Council – Response to Traveller Site Consultation**

The Town Council's stance on the suitability of the site adjacent to Stoney Wood remains unchanged from 2019 – this site does not represent an appropriate location to house Travellers.

The geography of the space is not safe for the Traveller Family (from comments in previous DDDC reports), alongside obvious traffic concerns around access and egress to and from the site. At present, there are no utilities on site and in our experience the land often has flowing surface water during wet weather.

The site is adjacent to the entry to Stoney Wood, and by many residents it is seen as an extension of the woodland owned by the Town Council which provides an important community green space. The site is maintained by the very active community group, Stoney Wood Group. This group maintain the site but also host and facilitate many activities throughout the year, such as hosting concerts, arts festival events and seasonal celebrations, as well as weekly gatherings and events. Use of the District Council land will jeopardise all these community uses and may not be compatible with a family living in close proximity to the site.

The area owned by the District Council has remained unused (and left to nature) since 2020 and the biodiversity on the site would be impacted by its use as a traveller site (there is a legal obligation to establish Biodiversity Net Gain).

Finally, should the site be used, the Town Council seeks assurances from the District Council that we will not be affected by this decision.

In practical terms this includes:

- Remediation of any impact on the Town Council estate, which occurs within duration of the site use a temporary traveller's site.
- DDDC to remove any other travellers both on the site and/or on WTC property.
- DDDC to assist the Town Council to take measures to protect its estate from unauthorised use.
- The remediation and assistance to be provided in a timely manner.

(This means for example, clearance of debris or repair of damage when it occurs and not simply when the site is vacated).

Response submitted to DDDC on 17/9/24