

Statement from Langham Parish Council regarding Travellers on the Recreation Ground

12/07/22

A group of Travellers took up occupancy at the rear of Langham Recreation Ground from about 7pm on Monday 11th July. They drove through the LCC Car Park (which was open for Bridge Club) and then opened the gate onto the Playing Fields, which had been verified as locked earlier the same day.

We informed Essex Police and Essex County Council promptly. An Officer from Essex Police's Rural Engagement Team made a site assessment visit at around 10am Tuesday 12th July. He will continue to make regular assessment visits whilst the Travellers are here.

A representative from the ECTU (Essex Countywide Traveller Unit) visited the site at around 11.30am this morning and served eviction notification papers to the Travellers. The process of eviction is likely to take 7 – 10 days in line with their standard operating procedures [outlined here](#). That timescale is similar to the last Recreation Ground traveller occupancy roughly 4 years ago.

Some residents might be hoping/expecting that these timescales could be shortened as a result of the "crackdown" promised by the Home Secretary in the new [Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act](#) enacted on 28th June this year. Having reviewed the actual new legislation and discussed it at length on site with the Police this morning, the legislation changes are in fact very limited and will make no difference at all to the vast majority of transient Traveller camps.

We realise that the presence of the traveller community on the Recreation Ground is unacceptable to the majority of Langham residents, however we do need the legal process to run its course in our efforts to move them on.

As stated in the ECTU Code for unauthorised encampments in Essex, a nomadic way of life is not against the law, provided that Travellers respect the Code. It is in the interests of the Traveller Camp group that they behave well and minimise disruption and disturbance to the local community whilst they are here.

If the Travellers do not abide by the ECTU Code, then residents can report any perceived misbehaviour via the normal 101 or 999 police reporting numbers. The case reference number should be quoted as follows: 42180892-22