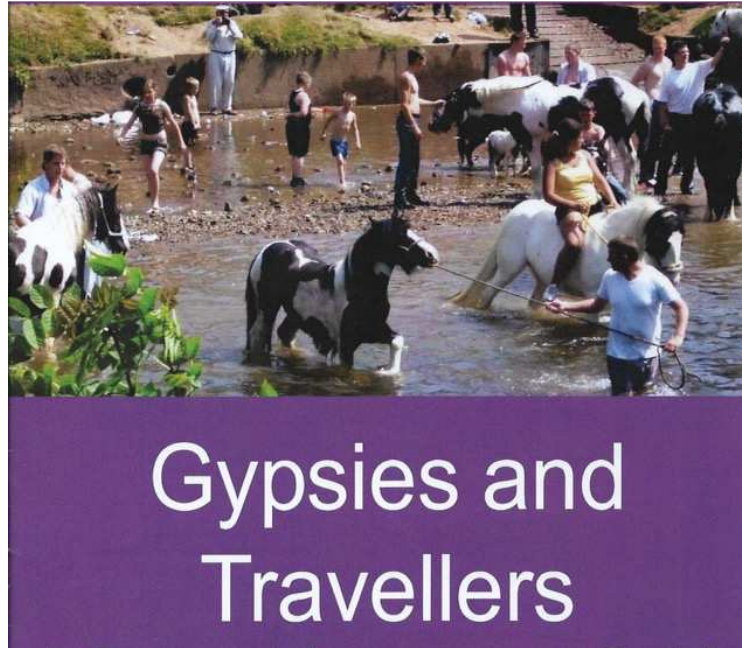


Alderley Edge Parish Council



Standard Operating Procedure
Guidelines to be followed in the event of
a Gypsy or Traveller Encampment
on Cheshire East or Alderley Edge Parish Council Land

July 2019

Introduction

Alderley Edge has been fortunate over the last forty years or so in that there have been no reported cases of Gypsy or Traveller encampments on lands within the Ward boundaries.

This changed on 24th May 2019 when a total of 13 caravans (or mobile homes) occupied the park in Alderley Edge for 8 days, prior to travelling to Cumbria for the annual Appleby Horse Fair.

The group gained access to the park through the Ryleys Lane Car Park access point, which has a 'pull up metal barrier post'. On this occasion the post was down allowing vehicles to access and exit the park during the May Fair, held a few days earlier. Whilst the post might have provided an additional deterrent if it had been put back in place, we are advised by the Cheshire and Warrington Traveller Team that this would not have guaranteed protection. AEPC has subsequently reinforced the barrier at this access point, but we must recognise that total protection against such ingress is not feasible.

Discussions with the very experienced Cheshire Travellers Team have made us more aware that lands can be easily occupied by determined travellers despite protective measures and residents must accept that chaining up gates or creating elaborate and often unsightly barriers will do little to protect these areas. What is vital is that residents remain vigilant and report suspect activity immediately.

During the recent encampment we conducted discussions with the travellers in a caring and reasonable manner. This is critical. Travellers are more likely to show respect and conform to requests for action and departure when treated well. It also engenders trust between the Council and the travellers. Sadly, residents will sometimes choose to take matters into their own hands and use hostile actions and abusive language towards the travellers in the hope that this might encourage their speedy departure. Needless to say, it seldom does.

I have placed a copy of this short document on the Alderley Edge Parish Council website for everyone to see. It is designed to help us all understand a world that we are not familiar with and one that needs care, consideration and a high degree of empathy. We are dealing with people who have chosen to live a different lifestyle from us. We must respect their desire to be different.

This document seeks to illustrate the sequence of events that must be followed by law (Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 and 2003). Each Parish Councillor has a copy – and residents are asked to contact any Parish Councillor if they suspect that land within the Ward is being occupied by travellers.

MDJ
July 2019

Useful Contact Details (July 2019)

Alderley Edge Parish Council

Mike Dudley-Jones 07900 162260
Craig Browne (Ward Councillor) 07989 724492
Rachael Grantham 07534 427437
Geoff Hall 07768 311110
Sarah Greenwood 07941691479
Bev Chapman 07763 569363
Liz Marshall 07910 773747
Myles Garbett 07712 295589
Mike Taylorson 07970 218240

Cheshire and Warrington Traveller Team

Single Point of Contact 0300 123 7727

Dawn Taylor - CWTT Manager 07780 842718
Helen Crampton – Research Office 0151 356 6537
Kyler Ashcroft – Senior Gypsy/Travellers Liaison Officer 07500 515307
PC Greg Thompson Gypsy/Travellers Police Liaison Officer 07540 059645

Cheshire East Parks (ANSA)

01270 686797

Alderley Edge Medical Centre

Contact Telephone 01625 584545

Sanitation Services

Chelford Mobile Services
01625 861740; 07740 841204

Sequence of Events

TRESPASS IS A CIVIL OFFENCE – NOT A CRIMINAL OFFENCE

Section 77, Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994

- A Resident observes a Gypsy/Traveller encampment of one or more vehicles; **Not Tents**
- **Immediately calls a Parish Councillor, reporting location and number of vehicles.**
- Parish Councillor will alert **Ward Councillor** and alert **Cheshire Travellers Team**
- **Cheshire Travellers Team** will advise their time of arrival - but will ALWAYS carry out a Welfare Assessment on arrival.
- Welfare Assessment to examine medical/healthcare needs. Travellers often move for a sick child or member of their group to be closer to medical facilities. Builds trust.
- Cheshire Travellers Team will establish why group are here.
- Also establish the number of vehicles and head count of adults and children
- How was the land accessed?
- With the Ward Councillor (or nominated Parish Councillor) they will then negotiate a departure date and time. **It is perhaps at this point that helpful sanitary facilities can be negotiated and provided. Bins for litter, porta-loos and possibly porta - washing facilities. This to improve hygiene and minimise clean up concerns after departure. It is a powerful negotiating tool.**
- The negotiation and agreement will be backed up by serving a Section 77 notice with the agreed departure date and time added to it. (Section 77 also protects land from the same group returning within 3 months)
- With the agreed departure date and time on the served Section 77 – the group leave.

Sequence of Events (continued)

TRESPASS IS A CIVIL OFFENCE – NOT A CRIMINAL OFFENCE

The Group decide NOT to leave on the agreed date

Section 78, Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994

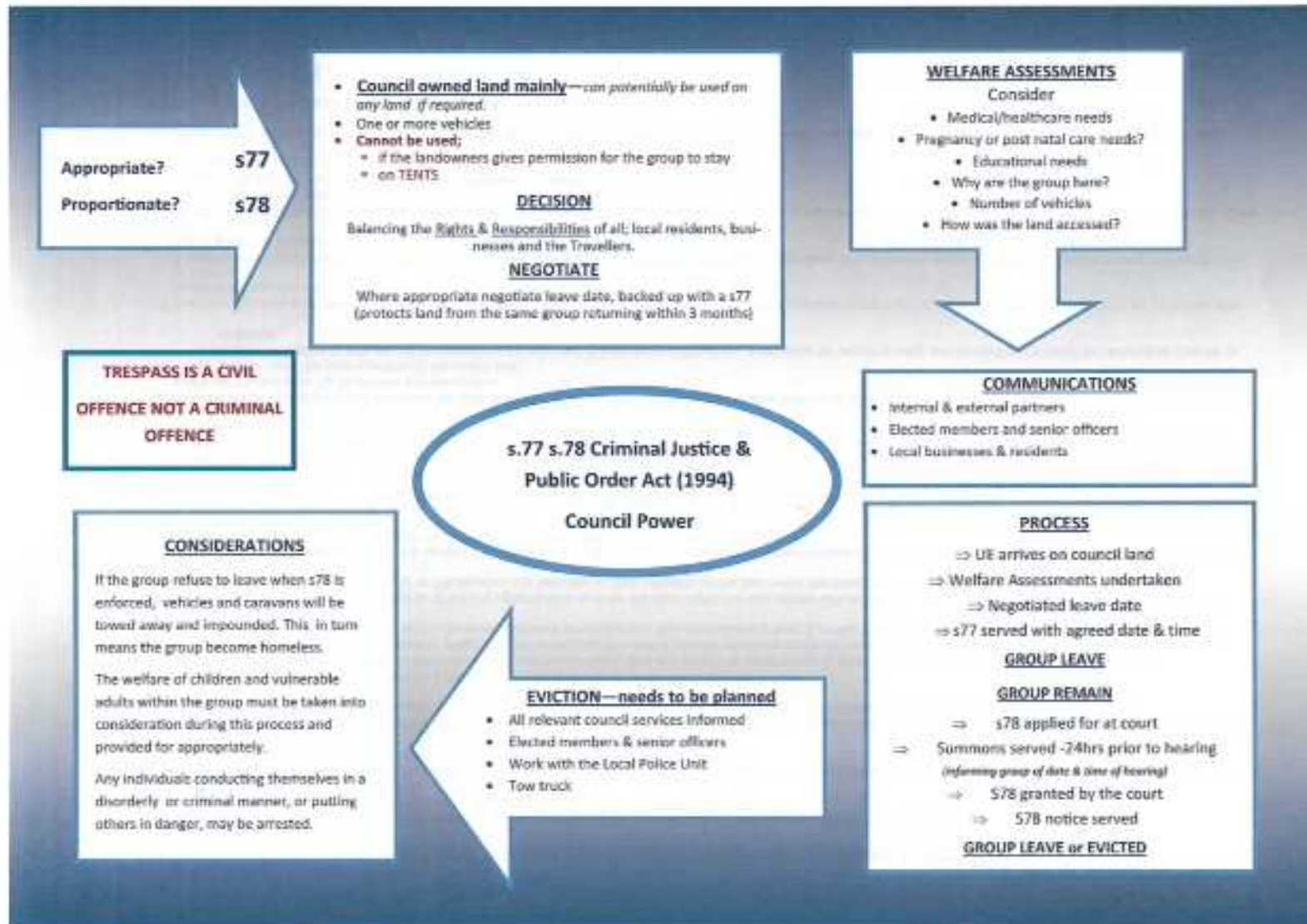
- The Group have decided not to leave; **Section 78 notice** applied for at court
- A summons served on the Group 24 hours prior to the Court Hearing, informing them of date and time of the court hearing.
- Section 78 notice granted by the Court to depart 'forthwith'. This notice is always granted but it does incur a £225.00 cost
- Section 78 notice served on the Group. Travellers Team Police Liaison Officer will attend with other Police.
- Group leave - or are evicted*

***EVICTION needs to be carefully planned.**

- **All relevant Council Services informed**
 - **Close liaison with Police**
 - **Tow trucks etc**

It would be unusual if the Group refuse to leave as vehicles and caravans will be towed and impounded. The Group then become homeless. Children and vulnerable adults must be taken into consideration and provided for appropriately. Any individuals conducting themselves in a disorderly or criminal manner may be arrested.

Action Aide Memoire



Recommended background reading

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/gypsies-and-travellers-simple-solutions-living-together>

Scroll down to 'Downloads' and either view full document as PDF or opt for the Easy Read Version