

# MARK GARNIER MP

## GYPSY, TRAVELLER AND SHOWPEOPLE SITE NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2011

### INTRODUCTION BY MARK

You will be receiving this newsletter because you have contacted me, Mark Garnier MP, voicing your concerns and thoughts about Wyre Forest District Council's proposals to bring up to 43 new traveller pitches to Wyre Forest. I am acutely aware of the district wide feeling against these proposals

and this newsletter is to keep people up to date with my work to address these issues. Please contact me if you want to be removed from this distribution list, but please also feel free to pass it on to anyone else who may be interested.



### MARK'S THOUGHTS ON THE GYPSY AND TRAVELLER PROPOSALS

Wyre Forest already hosts 47 gypsy and traveller pitches. These are located in the Sandy Lane Industrial estate on the Worcester Road out of Stourport on Severn. It is right that Wyre Forest has a number of sites for the travelling community, but how many is the big question. "I think that 90 pitches for our district are too many" says Mark. "That is

why I am looking at traveller provisions across Worcestershire to see how we compare. What is important to me is that we have our fair share and no more. In that way, I want to make sure that we have no extra need for new locations unless absolutely necessary. Importantly, that no new community in Wyre Forest has traveller pitches imposed

on them by the district council. I want to make sure that Manor Farm in Stourport, Sion Hill School in Kidderminster, the Lea Castle site, or any other areas in Wyre Forest, do not see new traveller pitches imposed on them."

### WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY?

All district councils, in their development plan, need to make provision for all type of needs, be they shops, schools, offices etc. This includes provision for minority communities including the travelling community. Failure to provide enough pitches means that if a travelling group has the permission of the landowner, they can set up camp on unauthorised areas until pitches are provided. This creates

great friction between communities, as seen in Dale Farm in Essex. The government's new Localism Bill seeks to give councils more choice. The Regional Spatial Strategy, that determined the number of pitches Wyre Forest needs to give, was abandoned by the government last year. But Wyre Forest DC is still using this as a basis of calculation. Travellers on authorised pitches pay council tax and the New Homes

Bonus, announced by the government, says that they will match the council tax revenue on all new homes for five years. That includes traveller pitches. In addition, there is a £60 million fund for development of new traveller pitches.

More on the relevance of the Localism Bill can be found at [www.markgarnier.co.uk](http://www.markgarnier.co.uk)

#### CONTACT MARK:

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## AREAS UNDER CONSULTATION:

### Sion Hill School, Kidderminster

10 pitches are proposed for the Sion Hill site. Mark says: "There are a number of reasons why this is, to my mind, inappropriate. The single biggest objection is that this site could be better used for employment, be it a new school or college, or another employment use. Residential use is a waste of an opportunity." Mark has met with local campaign organiser Sarah Rook to offer

support with the local campaign and to offer advice on framing the response. Sarah runs Broadwaters Residents Action Group - BRAG - and has organised a public meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> October at St Oswald's Church in Broadwaters. Sarah can be contacted at [sarah\\_elephant@hotmail.com](mailto:sarah_elephant@hotmail.com)

### Manor Farm, Stourport

Mark has received three thriving sums up how hundreds of businesses and inaccurate the emails with ejecting a couple Baker team have residents' from their home. been." Mark has concerns over this "There are many met with Leander and Tim Barnes, proposal. 15 reasons why the Baker report is again assuring pitches are flawed, but their them and local Locating these comments about residents of his pitches would Manor Farm being absolute support. mean closing derelict just about

### Stourport Road, Bewdley

15 pitches or travelling showpeople are proposed here. This is a relatively remote and so far, Mark has not received any written complaints about this site. However, Mark would urge anyone who is worried to get in touch.

### Lea Castle

This is the old Lea Castle hospital site and is one of the more isolated areas proposed. However, there is a local campaign being run by the Cookley Labour Party and they are holding a meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> October between 6.30 and 7.30 at

Cookley Village Hall. Mark has received limited comments from local residents, but this may be a reflection of the local action by Cllr Chris Nicholls. As yet, Chris has not been in touch with Mark, but he is,

of course, very welcome to share his thoughts.

## MORE INFORMATION

- More information can be found on Mark's website [www.markgarnier.co.uk](http://www.markgarnier.co.uk)
- Formal documents from Wyre Forest District Council can be found at <http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/cms/non-ignl-pages/planning-and-regulatory-servic/planning-policy/gypsy-travellers-and-travelli.aspx> including the public consultation pack.

## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO NOW?

By all means keep sharing your thoughts with Mark, but what is incredibly important is that people make a formal submission to the council. Mark will submit all emails he has received with his formal submission but he will remove contact details as they were sent to him and not the council (please contact Mark if you do not

want your email submitted). For this reason it is really important that you make a formal submission. You can do so by visiting:  
<http://wyreforestdc-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/>

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