

Meopham Parish Council
St Johns Centre
Wrotham Road
Meopham
DA13 0AA

Planning Department
Gravesham Borough Council
Sent by email

Dear Avril

Re: Application 20241164
Land South of White Post Lane, Cobham, Gravesend

Meopham Parish Council wishes to provide the following response:

1. Green Belt Protection

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Paragraph 147-151 states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it meets specific exceptions.

A traveller site does not fall under the exceptions unless very special circumstances exist to justify it.

Given that enforcement action is already in place, it suggests that the development is unauthorised and does not meet Green Belt exceptions.

2. Previous Enforcement Action & Unauthorised Development

If enforcement action is already ongoing, this indicates a breach of planning control, which is a strong material consideration.

NPPF Paragraph 59 specifically states that intentional unauthorised development in the Green Belt is a material consideration that weighs against a retrospective planning application.

The fact that enforcement is in place suggests that the site has already been deemed unsuitable.

3. Conflict with Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS)

The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS 2015) states that new traveller sites in the Green Belt should only be approved where they meet strict criteria.

Paragraph 16 states that local planning authorities should strictly limit new traveller sites in open countryside away from existing settlements.

Paragraph 25 allows councils to refuse applications if a site is deliberately developed without permission.

Given enforcement is already underway, it suggests the applicant ignored planning controls.

We therefore object to this proposal.

In addition to this response from Meopham Parish Council, I attach comments that we have received from residents.

Yours Sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Lisa Winter.

Lisa Winter
Clerk and RFO

Public Comments Received for:

20241164 – Land South of White Post Lane, Cobham, Gravesend

1. I wish to register my strong objection to this planning application.

I have been informed that in 2009, a High Court injunction was issued by Mr Justice Saunders (Case No. HQ09X02792) prohibiting ANY residential use of this land. This Order was placed by Gravesham Borough Council against 12 Defendants, including "Persons Unknown", meaning it applies to all future owners and occupiers of the land.

However, despite this clear legal ruling, caravans have been placed on the land recently. Trees and surrounding land have been damaged and destroyed. The Council has been informed recently that they are damaging and destroying trees and the surrounding area. The Council has been informed, yet this illegal development continues.

Many previous planning applications for residential use have already been refused.

If this application is passed, it will set a dangerous legal precedent, making it easier for future applications in Gravesham and surrounding areas to succeed. This would undermine the High Court ruling and the Council's past refusals, opening the floodgates to further unauthorised development across the region.

2. We write to strongly object the application for a gypsy/traveller site at White Post Lane, Cobham or any local location for that matter

This will lower the standards in the already over populated area where we struggle for doctors appointments for example and house prices will be effected without mentioning the potential increase in crime.

3. Planning Application reference 20241164 is part of application reference 2020054 which has already been refused and a Planning Inspectorate appeal dismissed. It would appear, therefore, that Gravesham BC Planning should have regarded it as invalid.

As near neighbours, we and many other concerned and objecting Sole Street residents have not received advance notice of this lates planning application. and only aware of it a few days ago.

Regardless of the Enforcement Notice applying to this land, the applicant has continued to implement substantial elements of his previous application in defiance and contempt of the High Court. Furthermore, working excavating machinery was spotted on the site on Friday afternoon 14/2/24 and reported on line to Gravesham BC.

Both Meopham and Cobham Parish Councils now need to exert strong pressure on Gravesham BC to enforce the restrictions that are currently in force.

4. Firstly I'm very disappointed and cannot see your reasoning why your meeting is being held in Harvel and not more central at Meopham Village Hall or St John's Hall which would be far easier and accessible for a lot of people to attend especially the elderly.

I strongly object to the planning application of a gypsy site at Nurstead Whitepost Lane.

Why would you let this go ahead when these people have no respect what so ever for our countryside. The devastation they have done to the trees in the lane, woodlands and land is heart breaking. Surely this is a criminal offence?? and you need to sort permission. Anyone else would have been prosecuted. But travellers seem to be above the law and get away with everything & anything.

I understand there is some sort of injunction/court order that no buildings/caravans can be put on that land. So why wasn't it stopped from the start. Why have they been allowed to carry on continuing cutting the woods and putting up fences before planning has been past.???

Why are they preparing such a large site!!? When the planning application states 3 units!!!. Its going to be a big site far more than 3.

So I very strongly object to this site going ahead. Let's keep Meopham a lovely place to live we don't want the countryside we have left being disrespected.

5. My reasons for objecting are as follows

1. There is an existing High Court injunction in place preventing this land being used as a gipsy/ travellers site
2. The wanton disregard displayed when the hedgerows were vandalised to allow the large building to be placed upon this land is indicative of the callous uncaring nature of the possible residents. The building was installed overnight to avoid interference from any interested parties and/ or Gravesham Council or the police. There has been trespass on to neighbouring property, for example the owner of a neighbouring area of woodland had to stop the felling of trees on her property. When she challenged the person cutting them down she was told he had the owner's permission when this lie was challenged as she is the owner the story changed to his fear a tree could damage his sister's car which should not have been parked on the land .
3. Yesterday Saturday 1st February fencing was being installed along the boundary of this land and mounds of earth have been placed by the entrance whilst this may be legal it indicates the owner's intention to proceed with or without planning permission. It will make removing the mobile buildings

installed difficult

4. There are no utility services provided, on other sites this has lead to accumulations of rubbish and human excrement. This attracts vermin and is unsightly.

5. A site will adversely affect property values in the neighbourhood.

6. There will be friction between the local residents and Mobile home owners. The mobile home owners seem to be a law unto themselves -as demonstrated by recent and ongoing events- they can be intimidating and in the past on other sites there has been criminal activities.

7. Within Kent there are already 7 gipsy/ traveller sites managed by KCC and 8 sites managed by individual local authorities plus sites in the London Borough of Bexley and Royal Greenwich.

8. There will be increased traffic on the lane, the road is narrow and this may result in accidents. It may prevent local residents who enjoy walking there, who walk their dogs, who cycle from using the Lane due to this and the fear of intimidation.

I appreciate that everyone has the right to a roof over their head but this is an inappropriate use of land that will damage the pleasant nature of the locality with the detrimental effects as outlined above for the local residents who choose to live here due to the quiet, peaceful and beautiful rural nature of the area.

Thank you for reading my objections. I hope that the Parish Council representation at Gravesham Council planning committee can include my views.