

DOCUMENT 2

Summary notes of meeting with caravan site owners

I met with the owners of a major caravan park on Friday 9th January 2015.

The purpose of the meeting was to ascertain some of their management practices with regards checking occupants of their caravans. I explained the Council project we are undertaking and that we have begun to establish evidence, from various sources, which appears to suggest that people may not be holidaying on their site(s).

The owners responded as follows:

- They operate a system whereby anyone buying or renting a caravan on their sites must provide them with details of their permanent address.
- They are long established holiday caravan site owners and would not allow permanent residential occupation of their caravans. The reason they cited was that this does not accord with their business model. They explained that a person living permanently on one of their sites would not spend the same amount of money that someone holidaying on the site would i.e. a person permanently on site would go to the local supermarket and would not use their on-site facilities. It is not in their financial interests to have people on site for long periods. They want a turnover of persons as people on holiday spend more money.
- They have invested millions in on-site holiday facilities to ensure their holiday offer is continuously updated.
- They check electricity and gas usage to ensure people are not on-site permanently.
- They rigorously police their shut-down period between Jan-March.
- They accepted that they have a lot of caravan pitches on many sites and that perhaps their checks are not as rigorous as they could be.

I asked if they would allow me to access their records and to spend a day analysing a handful of caravans on their sites to see who was occupying them. I explained that we have a lot of evidence of people giving caravans, on their sites, as permanent addresses in order to access Council and other services. They seemed surprised by this but also got quite defensive.

In conclusion they were very keen to work with me and to allow me to access records they hold.

I am now arranging to spend a day at the site in March (when the site "opens up" again) to access records and to speak to some caravan occupants.