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SŴN-Y-MŌR

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Dear Ms. Davies.

Licencing of Static Caravan sites.

I have spent the last 18 months opposing the extension of a licence on a nearby caravan site, whose applied to increase opening time from 10½ months to an all year licence.

It was apparent to me and the team of local people who worked with me and the local councillor in opposing this extension to the licence, that the planning officers from Gwynedd Council had not given the implications of an extension any thought to the implications on our community this extension could bring.

It was also very clear that the officers had no basic data on the various sites in the Gwynedd area, they considered that these sites were merely caravans for holiday purposes only.

Research into local caravan sites would have revealed a very different picture, the topography of these sites vary considerably, their policies, aims, business approach vary to such an extent that it would be extremely complex to design a set of rules to which one licence would cover all sites.

The officers were totally unaware that some sites are virtually residential now, caravan owners arrive late February

this is now their main residence. The modern static caravan offers 3 beds, kitchen, Bathroom, Lounge and is large enough to accommodate two people comfortably for a sustained period.

However, many Caravan owners have now moved on, and have changed the static caravan for a "Chalet" whose facilities and size are greater than most people's brick built properties in this area.

A chalet comprises of Lounge, Dining Area, Kitchen, Lavatory, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, A conservatory and outbuildings, Parking for 3 or more vehicles. They afford high standards of luxury and cost £90,000/140,000. They cannot be considered a Caravan and are certainly not temporary or mobile. They are the size of a good 3 bedroom bungalow. The ground rent varies between £4000/£8000 p.a. No Council tax is payable and there are some chalets in this area with views that would command £5m if it was brick built.

Chalets afford a high standard of living at incredibly low annual running costs.

The Council has no idea how many chalets are on each site and have never made checks to ascertain if they are the main residence of the occupier. Our investigations reveal that there is an hidden community residing in these so called holiday Parks. The Park owners have no interest in how the pitches are used, other than they are occupied and achieve a regular income for them. There is big big

In applying for a 12 month licence, is probably the first major change to so called Holiday parks that has arisen for at least a decade. Park owners invariably make no contact with the Local Council and vis a vis. The only exception are likely to be the larger groups like 'Bowne Leisure' who are radically changing the whole philosophy of their parks. High investment sees the Leisure Parks changing radically, whereby, the others make subtle changes quietly.

Those sites who are not developing their sites have no idea how long the owners stay. If you stay for more than 6 months in any year surely that becomes your main residence,

And what happens to your house in Derby, Leicester, Bham etc, it certainly is not left empty for such long periods, it would not be safe from intruders, squatters, theft & deterioration. Generally, these houses are:-

- ① Let through an agency.
- ② Married children, sell their own property and move into the vacant, parents house, the proceeds of the sale provides much needed cash for the parents, now living in North Wales Parks and the children/grand children.

You would be surprised if you knew how many fall into the second category.

They keep their name on the voting register and retain Council Tax in order to prove to Gwynedd that they have a main residence, in practice they do not

In addition to the financial benefits of these arrangements, there are side benefits which the parents enjoy, besides living at the seaside, on larger plots than their original home, they also retain their names on the doctors registers in Bham, Leic, etc where there are many more hospitals than here in Wales, better specialism, and by registering here as a holiday maker they have effectively two doctors, two Dentists, two opportunities if you are ill?

Site owners applying for 12 month licence realise the potential to extend the practices I have mentioned above and where vacancies on their site exist, it opens up a new avenue to explore, increase site fees and the next step is surely a change into a "residential park" the potential for increase in profit is enormous.

Areas like Rhyl in North Wales, have become an overspill for the cities like Liverpool. Caravans have been used to move those families on low income/benefits out of the city or are re-generating the caravan sites here in Wales, they are known as "Benefit Cities" They are transformed into 'Gethos' and destroy the nature of the area and have devastating effects on the infrastructure. Whilst making the site owners very rich.

Before you can make legislation to govern site licences you must have accurate data and a true picture of the existing status, we do not have this information and in order to make sensible and meaningful progress on this matter it needs further investigation, otherwise wrong decisions

As I initially stated I spent 18 months researching this issue surrounding the consequences of extending licences for Holiday purposes and moving towards residential status, I could probably fill another 20 pages with information obtained during my research, but the overwhelming aspect that continues throughout my investigation is that we need more data, more research, more information this is far more complex an issues than it first appears, I do hope the Assembly takes this matter seriously to do otherwise may well cause major infrastructure problems in future.

I would be pleased for you to pass on this letter to whom may use it to progress the matter.

Yours Sincerely
J.R. Slato-Hoson