

OPEN LETTER – from Dorset Camping.

On behalf of the Dorset campsites detailed below we hereby write the following open letter to raise awareness of our plight.

It is our belief that Dorset Council, contrary to Natural England's clear guidance to 'only take action if there is a SIGNIFICANT negative effect on protected sites', have recently imposed unfair, unreasonable and hugely onerous restrictions on dozens of much-loved Dorset Campsites this year.

It is our position that Council policies are ill-conceived, confused and have been misinterpreted to target small (often independently run) temporary campsites, ill-equipped to defend themselves. The Council has imposing significant financial burdens on local businesses as though they were major industrial developments.

Many well-known and much-loved campsites which have been welcoming visitors for many years, some for decades without interruption have suddenly and unfairly been threatened with enforcement and closure! Fees and lengthy ill-conceived applications have been demanded by Dorset Council with little or no likelihood of success.

It is our opinion that Legislation being applied by Dorset Council was intended to address an increase in urban sprawl and major building projects where a SIGNIFICANT harm to the environment is likely. Instead, it has been applied to small temporary campsites, arguing that collectively, the campsites cause SIGNIFICANT harm to protected areas. We believe that this assault on small (often family) businesses is unfair and unbalanced when compared with hotels, Caravan Parks and other major industry etc which currently pay nothing!

As a result of these restrictions and the manner in which they have been delivered, many local campsites and local business in Dorset may fail. The result will be a loss of jobs and the loss of many hundreds of thousands (if not millions) of pounds to the local economy.

Closures are highly likely to encourage visitors to wild camp in unsupervised areas resulting in a far greater detrimental effect on the environment and with an increased risk of fires and damage to flora and fauna.

It is our position that Dorset Council has failed to follow salient national advice from Natural England. They are failing to consider the impact on the local economy, the impact on the Countryside and the livelihood of many local people, further more Dorset Council have failed to implement a 'mechanism' by which they can consider reasonable mitigation!

The provision for mitigation of onerous projects that SIGNIFICANTLY threaten protected area is welcome and well-advised Government legislation. However, when related to Poole Harbour (with its thousands of boat movements, swinging moorings, ferries, marinas, pleasure boats, numerous Brownsea Island events and Poole Quay, its working ports and Wytch Farm oil field,

fishing fleets and the contribution of Poole and Hamworthy along its banks) for Dorset Council to propose that a small temporary campsite, some many miles away, causes SIGNIFICANT harm, becomes absurd.

To be clear, we love and care for the environment and the local ecology of this beautiful part of the Country. The beauty of this area is why many of the undersigned chose to open such business's, seeking to share our joy and pride in the local area and its ecological diversity.

We seek only to be treated fairly, to be consulted reasonably and to assist with the protection of our countryside.

Submitted for consideration.

NB: If your temporary campsite has been refused permission or if you are being asked to submit an application for Permitted Development this year please get in touch;

info@dorset-camping.co.uk

Blue Pool Camping

California Camping

Clayford Field Camping

Eweleaze Farm Camping

Furzebrook Road Camping & Caravanning

Hartland Stud Camping

Innisfree Camping

Knowle Farm Camping

Norden Farm Caravan & Camping Club

Primrose Field Campsite

Shortlake Farm Camping

Swanage & Wareham Rugby Club Camping & Caravanning

Swanage Bijou Camping

Wooders Campsite