

Travellers given year to leave village site after appeal defeat



Andrew Biddle, Mr Tidd, Fred Smith from the Romany rights association and Simon Jay (*Image: George Thompson*)

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A community of travellers who settled in a south Norfolk village have been given a year to find new homes after an appeal was thrown out.

Holly Oaks is a traveller settlement on land of London Road in Sutton, near Wymondham, and is home to families living across eight pitches.

In March 2020, South Norfolk Council took enforcement action against the camp, which was set up without the benefit of planning permission, but 11 people based there all submitted appeals to the Planning Inspectorate against this.



But after inspector Simon Hand ruled in the council's favour, the families have been left with a year to find alternative arrangements.

In his report, Mr Hand wrote: "I am obliged to consider the best interests of the children, which is a primary consideration, and have had that uppermost in my mind, along with the human rights of the appellants, their right to a home and to retain their cultural lifestyle.

"However, the site is prominent and incongruous and causes significant harm to the landscape.

"It harms the setting of the nearby non-designated heritage assets and is disproportionate in size and would dominate the nearby settled community.

"These factors are sufficiently serious and of sufficient weight that they are not outweighed by the factors in favour of granting planning permission."



The inspector instead ruled that the site must be vacated, with the families living there given 12 months to do so.

It comes as a blow to the families that have settled there, who had pleaded to be given a stay of execution.

Speaking previously, Simon Jay, one of those living on the site said: "What more do we have to do? If we are moved off here, we will have to travel around Norfolk again - we do not want to do that.

"We are trying to stop people being stressed with us."

Mr Hand noted that the existing traveller pitch in the town, on Chepore Lane, had not been a consideration in making his decision.

He added: "I recognise the situation the appellants are in. I consider this to be the wrong site in the wrong location."