

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
KING'S BENCH DIVISION**

Claim No: QB-2019-000616

B E T W E E N :

**(1) NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL
(2) WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

Claimants

– and –

**(1) THOMAS CORCORAN
(2)-(53) OTHER NAMED DEFENDANTS
(54) PERSONS UNKNOWN FORMING UNAUTHORISED ENCAMPMENTS
WITHIN THE BOROUGH OF NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH**

Defendants

FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF MARTIN RONE-CLARKE

I, **Martin Rone-Clarke**, Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer at Warwickshire Police, based at Nuneaton Justice Centre, Vicarage Street, Nuneaton CV114JU will say as follows:

1. I am the Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer at Warwickshire Police. I joined Warwickshire Police in 1990 and, after initially retiring in 2019, returned to Warwickshire Police to take up my current role. In my role, I act as the liaison between the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller ('GRT') community and the Police, and I am especially passionate about encouraging engagement between the Police and the GRT community, and educating Police Officers and helping them understand the GRT community and their needs.
2. I make this statement at the request of the First Claimant to present to the court the data that I hold in relation to unauthorised encampments that have formed in the county of Warwickshire (the '**County**'), as well as other relevant information on encampments that have formed and also the County's transit and stopping provision.
3. The facts and matters set out by me in this witness statement are either know by me directly and are true, or are known by me indirectly and are believed to the best of my knowledge

to be true. In relation to matters falling into the latter category, I have set out the source of my knowledge and belief. This statement has been produced following correspondence with the Claimants' legal representatives.

Unauthorised Encampment Data

4. As part of my role, I maintain a record of the unauthorised encampments that form in the County. I have consulted that record and can see that, since December 2024, there have been 42 unauthorised encampments in the County. These encampments have occurred on both private and local authority land. The breakdown of these encampments as between local authority areas is as follows:

- i. Rugby: 17
- ii. Stratford: 13
- iii. Warwick: 5
- iv. North Warwickshire: 4
- v. Nuneaton and Bedworth: 3

5. I have also consulted both my records and those of Warwickshire Police, and present below the unauthorised encampment data from the past seven years.

Local Authority Area	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Stratford District	16	17	13	10	11	6	12
Warwick District	39	44	10	11	9	10	14
Nuneaton and Bedworth	33	24	12	6	7	14	1
Rugby Borough	44	35	13	10	8	22	16
North Warwickshire	7	4	7	11	9	5	6
TOTAL	139	124	55	48	44	57	49

6. The downward trend of unauthorised encampments in the County since 2022 can be attributed to many factors, including the establishment of the Kirby Glebe Farm Site in North Warwickshire (which is a large permanent Traveller site, most – but not all – of which now has planning permission, although there are injunctions in place to prevent expansion and further unauthorised development on the site), the discontinuance of the Kenilworth Horse Fair and, in Nuneaton and Bedworth, the presence of the injunction order prohibiting the formation of unauthorised encampments on 142 selected sites.
7. Rugby Borough continues to experience higher unauthorised encampment numbers than other local authority areas in the County. Many of these encampments are associated with a well-known Traveller family based outside of Warwickshire who target commercial premises for criminal enterprise, particularly the theft of high value cables and other materials.
8. Lastly, I also present a breakdown of the number of unauthorised encampments that formed on adopted highways, as recorded in both mine and Warwickshire Police’s records.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total encampments (as above)	139	124	55	48	44	57	49
Warwickshire CC/highways	38 (27%)	40 (32%)	18 (33%)	5 (10%)	8 (18%)	6 (11%)	15 (31%)
Total caravans	1389	1017	360	376	385	389	244

9. In the last year or so, there has been a notable increase in unauthorised encampments forming on adopted highways maintained by the local highway authority (the Second Claimant). Those encampments are typically ‘New Age Travellers’, who favour highway verges.

The Unauthorised Encampments in the Borough of Nuneaton and Bedworth

10. I have consulted my records, and provide the following information in relation to the three unauthorised encampments that have occurred in Nuneaton and Bedworth since December 2024.

4 September 2025

11. I understand from the First Claimant's legal representatives that a small encampment formed on the grass verge outside of Aldi in Weddington. I was unaware of this encampment until advised of it by the First Claimant's legal advisers in the preparation of this witness statement. I therefore have no further detail to add in relation to this encampment, but have recorded it within my data.

13 May 2025

12. Hazel Way, Bermuda Industrial Estate (not a site protected by the injunction). Thirteen caravans and associated vehicles forced entry to a vacant (but still commissioned) privately owned commercial premises, with the occupants locking themselves in. The occupants had forced open a padlocked gate with an angle-grinder. Ten dogs were also present at the encampment.
13. The occupants were identified as members of a well-known Traveller family based outside of Warwickshire, and who are identified frequently in the Borough of Rugby (but who had not hitherto been identified in Nuneaton and Bedworth). The family are known for their criminal enterprise of theft from vacant commercial premises; their modus operandi is to force entry and lock themselves in a premises overnight, and strip high value materials from the premises (particularly cabling). There is a trigger plan that is activated if and when the family are identified on such commercial/industrial sites.
14. Given the significant risk of high value theft and damage being committed, the trigger plan was initiated, and Warwickshire Police sought to use its powers under section 60C of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994. A Police Support Unit was deployed and,

following negotiation, the encampment left the site and the area generally (and were observed heading towards Birmingham).

15. To my knowledge, the family have not been identified in the Borough of Nuneaton and Bedworth either prior to or since this incident. Immediately prior to arriving at the site, the family had been identified elsewhere in the County.

24 March 2025 to 4 April 2025

16. Withybrook Way, Bulkington (not a site protected by the injunction). Two horse-drawn caravans formed a small encampment on adopted highway. I did not receive any reports of issues or adverse impacts relating to this encampment, and I understand that the encampment vacated the land of its own motion prior to any enforcement action being taken by either of the Claimants. No policing response was required in relation to this encampment.

Transit and Stopping Provision

17. The County does not have a transit site. I am also aware that the neighbouring county of Staffordshire also does not have a transit site. However, West Midlands, which neighbours both the County and Staffordshire, operates two transit sites (in Walsall and Dudley). Of those two sites, one (Walsall) has a full suite of facilities on site, including toilets, showers, electricity supply and waste and water services.
18. I have in the past on occasions used both of the above mentioned transit sites, offering an alternative temporary site provision to families on unauthorised encampments in Warwickshire.
19. I am currently working with the Second Claimant (Warwickshire County Council) and Warwick District Council on a proposed transit site in Warwick. However, I expect that it will still be a few years before that site is operational.
20. The First Claimant does not at this time have a formally adopted negotiated stopping policy. I understand from the First Claimant's legal representatives that, in December 2024, the

court was informed that the First Claimant was working with other local authorities in the County to establish a countywide protocol for managing unauthorised encampments, which is separate to a negotiated stopping policy.

21. In 2017, a protocol for managing unauthorised encampments was established in Warwickshire and signed up to by all local authorities, the police and fire service. It has a working group that I chair, and the protocol was amended in 2022 to introduce and reflect the new Police powers that came into power in June 2022 under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 (which amended the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, notably by inserting sections ss60C-E).
22. I am in the process of creating a standardised negotiated stopping policy for all local authorities in Warwickshire. I have written that policy in conjunction with the above mentioned protocol working group; the drafting is its final stages, and I can report that good progress has been made. My view is that, subject to the appendices being finalised, the policy is now ready for adoption, and I would be happy for the First Claimant to adopt it (subject of course to its usual governance and democratic processes). If adopted in its current form, I would aim to then expedite a full County-wide implementation.

Engagement with the GRT Community

23. As I have set out above, I am very keen to encourage engagement between Warwickshire Police and the GRT community. However, I believe that the engagement should extend further, and should also exist with other agencies and public bodies, and the settled community. My view is that tensions often arise between the GRT community and others because of a misunderstanding and stereotyping of the GRT community; an entire community should not be judged against the standard of a minority of problematic members. It is my firm view that all forms of racism should be challenged, and racism and prejudice against the GRT community is no different in this regard.
24. In an attempt to forge better engagement with the GRT community, in 2022 I established the Warwickshire GRT engagement group. The group now consists of a variety of service providers across health, education and community engagement. The group has proved productive in engagement and building better community cohesion. For the last three years,

the group has put together a project for GRT History month, using artwork created by primary school children across the County to promote GRT History, and displaying this work across Warwickshire Libraries and a finale event at Police HQ. The project has been extremely productive in educating the general public on the reality of the GRT community, and subsequently contributing to better community cohesion. Representatives from the Second Claimant's (Warwickshire County Council) Gypsy and Traveller Team have been involved in supporting this project, and other work from the GRT engagement group.

25. I believe that progress is being made in the County, and that engagement is leading towards better relationships between the GRT community and public bodies and key agencies and, over time, the settled community more generally.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings for contempt of court may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief in its truth.

Signed:

M Rone-Clarke

Martin Rone-Clarke

Date: 28th October 2025