



POLICY DOCUMENT

Unauthorised Traveller Encampment: Actions to Be Taken

Purpose. This procedure provides a practical, lawful and proportionate response when an unauthorised encampment is reported within the parish. It is an operational checklist, not legal advice. The landowner, police and relevant principal authority retain their own statutory responsibilities and decision-making powers.

Immediate Actions

1. **Assess urgency.** Call 999 where there is an immediate danger to life, violence or threats of violence, a crime in progress, fire, or a road obstruction creating an immediate risk. Otherwise contact Essex Police online or on 101 where crime, antisocial behaviour, significant damage, disruption or distress is reported.
2. **Confirm the location and ownership.** Record the exact site, access points, apparent landowner or managing body, arrival time, number and type of vehicles, and whether a highway, public right of way or council facility is affected.
3. **Notify responsible parties.** Inform the landowner without delay. If the land is not owned or managed by the parish council, notify the relevant district, county, highway or other public authority and ask for a named lead officer and incident reference.
4. **Protect safety.** Do not enter the encampment alone, obstruct vehicles, interfere with property, threaten occupants, or attempt a forced removal. Councillors and staff should not place themselves at risk.
5. **Open an incident log.** Record dates, times, reports, photographs taken lawfully from public or authorised locations, witness details, contacts, decisions and expenditure. Record facts neutrally and avoid assumptions about identity or background.

Land Ownership and Enforcement Route

- **Parish council land:** the Clerk should notify the Chair, insurers and the council's legal adviser; check delegated authority and financial limits; arrange a prompt site and welfare assessment with partner agencies; and obtain advice on the appropriate request to leave, possession proceedings or other lawful route.
- **Other public land:** refer the matter to the owning authority. The parish council should support information-sharing and community liaison but should not direct enforcement on land it does not control.
- **Private land:** advise the landowner to seek legal advice. Trespass is generally a civil matter. The landowner may ask occupants to leave if it is safe to do so, but should not use force or interfere with property. A court order may be required.
- **Police powers:** police decide whether statutory thresholds are met and what action is proportionate. Where people are residing, or intend to reside, on land without consent in

or with vehicles, additional powers may apply if the relevant conditions concerning damage, disruption or distress and a request to leave are satisfied.

Site, Impact and Welfare Assessment

The lead authority should assess and document: land ownership and consent; duration and scale; access and highway safety; damage, waste, noise, obstruction or other reported impacts; risks to occupants, neighbours and staff; sanitation and environmental health concerns; and any welfare needs involving children, health, disability, pregnancy or safeguarding. Relevant services should be contacted where a need is identified. Decisions must be evidence-based, necessary, proportionate and consistent with human rights and equality duties.

Communication and Conduct

- Nominate officer as the parish council contact, direct enquiries through the Clerk.
- Use calm, factual and non-discriminatory language. Following a nomadic way of life is lawful; action must be based on conduct, land rights and applicable legal tests, not ethnicity or perceived identity.
- Do not publish names, vehicle registrations, images of identifiable people or unverified allegations. Share personal data only where lawful and necessary.
- Issue public updates only when useful, confirming the responsible authority, reporting route and any safety advice without prejudicing operational decisions.
- Residents should report emergencies to 999 and non-emergency crime or antisocial behaviour to Essex Police online or on 101. Complaints about waste, highways or environmental health should go to the responsible authority.

Decision, Departure and Site Recovery

1. Ensure the competent landowner or authority records the legal basis, evidence, welfare considerations and proportionality of any decision to tolerate temporarily, negotiate departure or pursue removal.
2. After departure, inspect the site before public access resumes. Arrange lawful removal of waste or hazardous material, repair damage, and document costs for insurance or recovery where appropriate.
3. Review access controls, boundary security, lighting and signage. Any physical measures must preserve emergency access, lawful highway use, accessibility and planning requirements.
4. Close the incident log with a short lessons-learned review and report material decisions or expenditure to the council in accordance with confidentiality and data-protection requirements.

Legal Basis and Review

Relevant powers include Part V of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, as amended by the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 and subsequent legislation. The Home Office statutory guidance on unauthorised encampments was updated on 29 June 2026. Before acting, the responsible authority should check the current legislation, Home Office guidance, Essex Police procedures and its own legal advice.

Owner: Parish Clerk **Review:** Annually and after any incident or material legal change **Adopted:** [insert date]

Contacts

- Parish Clerk:
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- Parish Chair:
 - Cllr Mark Bissell : mark@directdisplays.co.uk : 07966-154401
- Uttlesford DC:
 - Enforcement : enforcement@uttlesford.gov.uk : 01799- 510461:
- County Councillor:
 - Cllr Geoff Bagnall : cllr.geoff.bagnall@essex.gov.uk :01799-510510
- District Councillor:
 - Cllr Mark Lemon : cllrlemon@uttlesford.gov.uk : 01279-730581
- Police: Emergency 999;
 - otherwise 101; PCSO Mike O'Donnell-Smith : (101) Ext 395353