

By: Oliver Mills, Managing Director, Kent Adult Social Services
To: Gypsy and Traveller Advisory Board – 11 February 2010
Subject: **RENTS ON PUBLIC SITES MANAGED BY KCC**
Classification: Unrestricted.

Summary: Proposed increases of rents from 1 April 2010

Background

1. (1) In February 2009, and in keeping with increases in other charges in the Kent Adult Social Services Directorate, the Gypsy and Traveller Advisory Board agreed to an increase of 5% in site rents with effect from 1 April 2009.

(2) The Rents currently charged on sites managed by the Gypsy & Traveller Unit are:

Aylesham Caravan Site Snowdown, Dover CT15 4LS	£51.50 per week
Barnfield Park Caravan Site New Ash Green, Sevenoaks TN15 7LY	£42.00 per week
Coldharbour Caravan Site Old London Road, Aylesford ME20 7NZ	£40.00 per week
Greenbridge Park Vauxhall Road, Canterbury CT1 1YZ	£51.00 per week
Heartenoak Caravan Site Heartenoak Road, Hawkhurst TN18 5EU	£48.50 per week
Polhill Caravan Site Dunton Green, Sevenoaks TN13 2TQ	£36.50 per week
Three Lakes Park Castle Road, Sittingbourne ME10 3NL	£48.00 per week
Windmill Lane Caravan Site Windmill Lane, West Malling ME19 6PJ	£49.50 per week

Government Policy: Mobile Homes Act 1983

2. (1) When the Mobile Homes Act 1983 changes take effect, probably in April 2010, the raising of rents in future will be regulated by the terms of the Act. There is a presumption that any increase or decrease would be no greater than any changes in the Retail Price Increase, unless the legitimate extra costs of the site operator justify a greater increase.

Level of Increase from 1 April 2010

3. (1) Many residents on the sites are claimants, and therefore the rents are paid by Housing Benefit. Increases in other charges in the Kent Adult Social Services Directorate are generally around 2.5% for 10/11 and therefore it is recommended that the current site rents are all increased by that margin.

(2) Two sites, Barnfield Park and Polhill, both in Sevenoaks district, provide occupiers with good locations; above average size plots and a relatively high standard of amenities. Barnfield Park was built in 1999. The site rents were £50 for a single pitch and £55 for a double pitch up till 2001. The Rent Officer assessed those rents as being "reasonable market rents", but Housing Benefit judged them "exceptionally high". So the rent was reduced to £40. Something similar happened with Polhill, which was built in 1996. The amenity blocks on the Polhill site were replaced in 2004/05. Housing Benefit regulations precluded rents being increased on all sites between 2001 and 2009. It is therefore recommended that the rents for Barnfield Park and Polhill be increased to bring them more into line with rents being charged on the other KCC managed sites.

(3) Subject to funding approval the existing Coldharbour Caravan Site will be replaced in 2010/11. The new site, also in Aylesford, will provide occupiers with new accommodation and amenities and therefore it is recommended that the rent on the new site should be £50 per week.

(4) These increases will enable the costs of managing and maintaining the sites to be more adequately covered by the income received.

(5) The above increases will produce the following new rents from 1 April 2010:

Aylesham Caravan Site Snowdown, Dover CT15 4LS	Existing New	£51.50 per week £52.79
Barnfield Park Caravan Site New Ash Green, Sevenoaks TN15 7LY	Existing New	£42.00 per week £45.00
Coldharbour Caravan Site Old London Road, Aylesford ME20 7NZ	Existing New	£40.00 per week £41.00
Greenbridge Park Vauxhall Road, Canterbury CT1 1YZ	Existing New	£51.00 per week £52.28
Heartenoak Caravan Site Heartenoak Road, Hawkhurst TN18 5EU	Existing New	£48.50 per week £49.71

Polhill Caravan Site Dunton Green, Sevenoaks TN13 2TQ	Existing New	£36.50 per week £42.00
Three Lakes Park Castle Road, Sittingbourne ME10 3NL	Existing New	£48.00 per week £49.20
Windmill Lane Caravan Site Windmill Lane, West Malling ME19 6PJ	Existing New	£49.50 per week £50.74

Recommendation

4. (1) Members of the Advisory Board are asked to endorse the recommendation that these new rents are introduced from 1 April 2010, and that licensees are advised of the increases with the required 28 days notice in advance of that date, and the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services be advised accordingly so that he can take their views into account when he takes his decision on this matter.

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Background papers: None