











## GROUP ROLES: 1. TRAVELLERS



### Your views

#### 'We have rights like everyone else!'

You represent 20 families. Some people call you 'Gypsies' but you prefer to be called 'Travellers', because rather than living in one place, you like to move around and live in caravans. Some of your families have been Travellers for over 100 years.

You are strongly in favour of the caravan site near Elburgh village – you own the land there and you want to persuade the council to give you permission to park your caravans there permanently. You want somewhere official to go, so you can run a site which is well managed and doesn't create any problems for other people living in the village.

You used to live on a site nearby at a place called Highborough, but you did not have permission from the council to live there, so you had to move and now you have nowhere to go.

You enjoy a drink and a party like anyone else, but you object to people saying you are all thieves and drunkards! The people who say this are prejudiced. Under Article 13 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it says that everyone in the world has a right to 'freedom of movement' and Article 25 says that 'everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living'. You have these rights just like anyone else, so you should be allowed to live on your caravan site.

### Your evidence

#### 1. There aren't enough legal sites

Many Travellers want to settle on council-run sites, but the problem is there aren't enough of these sites. Local authorities in the UK used to have a legal duty to provide sites for Traveller groups. However, the 1994 UK Criminal Justice and Public Order Act removed this obligation, so local authorities stopped providing as many sites for Travellers. As a result there are now too few sites for the Traveller communities. This has led to more Travellers buying private land to create their own sites, but they need planning permission for this.

This is what you want to do, rather than continue to live on an illegal site.

#### 2. Neighbours' views of official sites for travelling people

Other people who live in the area usually oppose the creation of permanent sites for travelling people – but do they exaggerate the problems? Tom Duncan at the Planning Exchange, Glasgow thinks they do. He went to talk to people who objected to Travellers' sites in Scotland to find out whether their views changed after the sites had been up and running for a year or more. He found that:

- All the sites with council permission were well run and the problems were much less than the neighbours feared.
- Many neighbours' fears had been based on previous experiences of illegal sites.
- Most householders had no complaints about the Travellers and many admitted that they had worried unnecessarily.
- Primary schools had been able to cope with the arrival of Traveller children.
- Police authorities reported no noticeable increase in crime in the vicinity of sites.

| Source: Joseph Rowntree Foundation Housing Research 201. December 1996.

## GROUP ROLES: 2. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



### Your views

#### **'These Travellers will damage our business!'**

You represent the views of local businesses in Elburgh village. Collectively the businesses make £377 million every year and employ 2,200 local people. You are firmly against the proposal for the Travellers' caravan site.

In your opinion, the site would put off other businesses from coming to the area, and the value of your business would go down because no one would want to buy a business next to a Traveller site.

There is no doubt in your mind that crime around the illegal Traveller site at Highborough was much higher than elsewhere. You think it is well known that theft and damage to machinery is higher near Traveller sites and there have even been reports of Travellers stealing local cows and sheep!

Businesses near the old illegal site had to spend a lot of money to build high fences around their property to protect it from the Travellers, their insurance premiums went up and they had to pay people to clean up the mess that the Travellers made on their land. These are all extra costs that businesses cannot afford.

Staff who work at night would not feel safe with the Travellers living nearby.

### Your evidence

#### **Mr Frank Potter of Enamel Tiling presents an eye-witness report on the impact of the unauthorised Travellers' site at Highborough:**

My family have run a tiling business in this area for 40 years and we have never experienced as many problems as when the Gypsies came and set up camp near to us at Highborough. It all started one evening, when my wife caught sight of a young man running away from our warehouse with a bag of tools. We called the police but they arrived too late. We lost £500 worth of equipment that night.

The next incident was when a group of youths started throwing stones at our dog. We called them to stop but we were met with a barrage of abuse and they turned their stones on us! We decided to take the matter into our own hands and a group of us went down to the caravans, but the Gypsies refused to talk to us. They were all drunk and told us to 'get lost' in no uncertain terms.

And then there's the litter – the caravan site was always a complete tip, with old refrigerators and car wheels lying around everywhere – it really looked bad and many business who were keen to set up here, decided against it when they saw all the mess.

Since the Gypsies have been there, we have also noticed a lot more rubbish dumped in a ditch just half a mile from the caravan site.

## GROUP ROLES: 3. LOCAL RESIDENTS GROUPS



### Your views

#### **'We don't want Travellers ruining our historic village!'**

You are firmly against the proposal for a Traveller site in your village.

The village is hundreds of years old, and there are a lot of tourists who come to visit.

You are worried that the tourists would be put off by the Traveller site and they would no longer come. This would affect the local shops very badly.

You are also worried about crime and security. You have heard from people who live near the illegal Traveller site that they have suffered

a great deal from Travellers getting drunk and causing a disturbance.

You have also heard that Travellers leave a lot of litter around and crime rates, particularly for theft and damage to property, are higher in places where Travellers gather.

In your opinion the village services can't cope with extra people.

The schools are full so they couldn't take in any more children, and the roads are already congested. The sewage treatment plant is also too small to cope with the extra people.

**Your evidence next page**



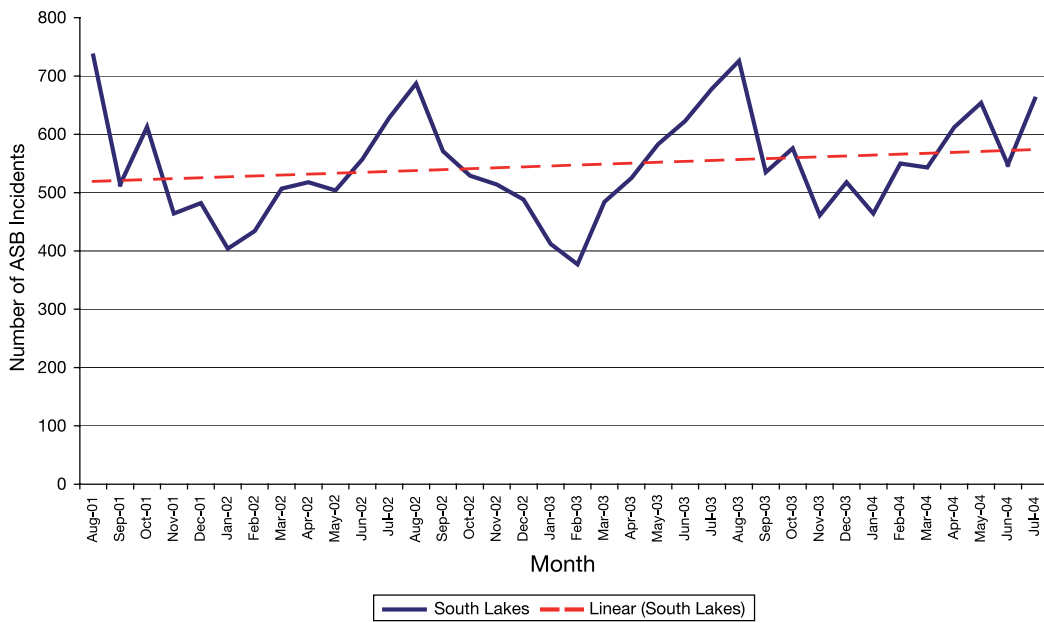
GROUP ROLES: 3. LOCAL RESIDENTS GROUPS contd



Your evidence

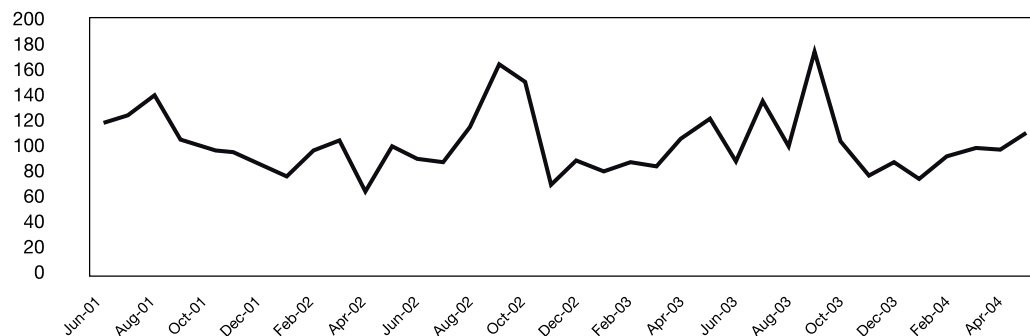
The largest gathering of Travelling people in the UK happens every year in June, in Appleby, South Lakeland. The graphs below show the rate of theft and anti-social behaviour recorded by the police in South Lakeland throughout the year. Is there an increase in this criminal activity around June?

Number of anti-social behaviour incidents in South Lakes by month  
Date Range: 01 August 2001 to 31 July 2004



Source: Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership – Crime Audit 2004  
[www.southlakeland.gov.uk/main.asp?page=1490](http://www.southlakeland.gov.uk/main.asp?page=1490)

Reported incidents of theft by month South Lakeland  
Number of Crimes



Significant Change – Number of Crimes – Cumbria – South Lakeland – Theft (Other than vehicle) and handling stolen goods – Jun 2001 – 31 May 2004

Source: Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership – Crime Audit 2004  
[www.southlakeland.gov.uk/main.asp?page=1490](http://www.southlakeland.gov.uk/main.asp?page=1490)

## GROUP ROLES: 4. LOCAL WILDLIFE AND ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP



### Your views

#### 'Protect the rare plants! Say NO to the Travellers' site!'

You are against the proposal for the Traveller site because of the impact you think it will have on the local environment and wildlife.

Near the proposed site there is a nature reserve called Shadey Wood which is home to a number of rare plants, for example herb paris and early purple orchids. There are also nightingales, and bats in the wood. You are concerned that the Travellers will disturb and damage the wildlife in the wood by cutting trees for firewood, trampling the plants, and making noise.

You are also concerned about the impact of litter and bonfires, which you think will cause pollution affecting people and wildlife. You have also heard that Travellers often work on machinery, which can cause oil leaks. You are very concerned that this oil could contaminate the local reservoir. For all these reasons, you think that this is not a good place for a Travellers' site – they should go somewhere else.

### Your evidence

#### Shadey Wood Nature Reserve

#### Wildlife Survey Results 2004 – Plant Life in Shadey Wood

Local wildlife volunteers have undertaken a substantial survey of Shadey Wood Nature Reserve and have found an impressive diversity of orchids including the pyramidal orchid and such specialities as early purple, bird's-nest, greater butterfly, autumn ladies-tresses and most impressive stands of green-winged. Ten different types of orchids have been recorded, making this site one of the best places to see orchids in Britain. The rare emerald damselfly has also been spotted in the wood near the pond area, adding further to the outstanding wildlife interest.

The importance of preserving the orchids in Shadey Wood is highlighted in a recent Plantlife report *Where have all the flowers gone?* by Peter Marren. This compared modern and historic county floras, giving an estimate of extinction rates. Essex was shown to have **lost 68 species** between 1862 and 1974.



### ACTIVITY 3

## REAL-LIFE TRAVELLER PLANNING APPLICATION

The Travellers' site role-play is staged in an imaginary village but conflicts such as these are very common. Most applications for planning permission for Travellers' sites meet with strong local opposition. Research in 1997 by ACERT showed that, whereas 80 per cent of all planning applications were accepted, 90 per cent of Gypsy and Traveller planning permission applications were initially rejected (although more were passed on appeal).<sup>2</sup>

The worksheet 'Real-life Traveller Planning Inquiries' at the end of this resource will enable students to reflect on a real case study and to and consider further the rights that Travellers have.

<sup>2</sup> [www.cre.gov.uk/downloads/gt\\_strategy\\_final.doc](http://www.cre.gov.uk/downloads/gt_strategy_final.doc)

### ACTIVITY 3

## REAL-LIFE TRAVELLER PLANNING APPLICATION

Consider the applications and appeals made by Travellers in the Surrey Heath area: [www.surreyheath.gov.uk/planning/PlanningPolicyandConservation/pennypot.htm](http://www.surreyheath.gov.uk/planning/PlanningPolicyandConservation/pennypot.htm)

- On what grounds are the applications made by Travellers refused?
- If you were in charge of Surrey Council, what would you do to keep local residents happy and meet the needs of the travelling community?
- Which human rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights would be threatened if governments made no provision for Traveller sites? Go to: [www.amnesty.org.uk/udhr/simple.shtml](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/udhr/simple.shtml)



## CURRICULUM LINKS

### England

#### KS4 Citizenship

- 1a. Students should be taught about the legal and human rights and responsibilities underpinning society and how they relate to citizens, including the role and operation of the criminal and civil justice systems.
- 1b. Students should be taught about the origins and implications of the diverse national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and the need for mutual respect and understanding.
- 2b. Students should be taught to express, justify and defend orally and in writing a personal opinion about such issues, problems or events.
- 2c. Students should be taught to contribute to group and exploratory class discussions, and take part in formal debates.
- 3a. Students should be taught to use their imagination to consider other people's experiences and be able to think about, express, explain and critically evaluate views that are not their own.

#### KS4 PSHE

- 3a. Students should be taught about the diversity of different ethnic groups and the power of prejudice.
- 4g. Students should be taught the knowledge, skills and understanding through opportunities to: consider social and moral dilemmas.

#### KS4 Humanities

Opportunities are provided for students to explore: the spatial, political, social, economic, environmental and temporal dimensions of human existence.

### Northern Ireland

Curriculum links relate to the current guidelines for the Revised Curriculum for NI

#### Learning for Life and Work: Local and Global Citizenship Strand

##### Diversity and Inclusion

Young people should have opportunities to:

- Investigate how and why conflict, including prejudice ... may arise in the community.
- Investigate ways of managing conflict and promoting community relations, reconciliation

##### Human Rights and Social Responsibility

Young people should have opportunities to:

- Investigate why it is important to uphold human rights standards in modern democratic societies, including meeting basic needs, protecting individuals and groups of people.

##### Equality and Social Justice

Young people should have opportunities to:

- Explore why some people may experience inequality or discrimination on the basis of their group identity.

### Scotland

Curriculum links relate to the current guidelines for the new Curriculum for Excellence.

**People and place:** The human environment

**People in society:** Conflict and decision making in society

The activity supports the development of students as:

Successful learners able to:

- learn independently and as part of a group
- make reasoned evaluations.

Responsible citizens able to:

- understand different beliefs and cultures
- make informed choices and decisions
- develop informed, ethical views of complex issues.

**CURRICULUM LINKS** contd

## Effective contributors

- communicate in different ways and in different settings
- work in partnership and in teams
- solve problems.

**Wales****KS4 Personal and Social Education****Knowledge:**

- Value cultural diversity and equal opportunity and respect the dignity of all.
- Be moved by injustice, exploitation and denial of human rights.

**Skills:**

- Listen attentively in different situations and respond appropriately.
- Communicate effectively their feelings and views in a wide range of situations.
- Appreciate, reflect on and critically evaluate another person's point of view.
- Resolve conflict with a win/win situation.
- Make moral judgements and resolve moral issues and dilemmas.
- Work both independently and cooperatively.

