

Appendix II – Summary of Complaints themes

We have collated a summary of the complaints received.

‘The problem partly revolves around the static caravans and motorhomes that are now there permanently, and those that visit more intermittently or on a daily basis. It’s clear that concrete blocks have been placed at the entrance to the shingle bank to stop wide vehicles from entering, but I suspect that the Parish Council aren’t aware that the drivers of the Caravans and motorhomes have actually moved them wider apart to get their vehicles through.’

‘Also, many of the people permanently stationed at the Shingle Bank leave a lot of rubbish and litter around, including bottles, metal objects and cans. I’ve seen people literally throw their rubbish onto the beach because they can’t be bothered to take it with them, or to walk up to the council bins provided near the entrance. It’s only a matter of time before a child is injured walking on glass or sharp metal.’

‘If motorhomes and caravans are allowed to park permanently there, fine, but if not, then they need to be prevented from doing so as they are destroying the serenity of the area, and the pleasure that many families, children and walkers get from being there. A minority is destroying the area. I speak as a motorhome owner myself, but one who sticks to designated areas only.’

‘My complaint is the amount of people that are now living along the shingle bank in caravans and mobile homes, I know that some people are not there for a few days as they are leaving and returning in work vans, there are gazebos erected along with washing lines. There must be in excess of 20 vehicles parked along the entire length. I presume these people do not have permission to be parked there permanently or for long periods and don’t pay? Its a mess. I know that in January and February the camp sites on the island close and some people who live on them are homeless and may stay there. Hopefully something will be done about it, the same issue happened along the sea wall in Shellness a few years ago and this has now been dealt with appropriately.’

‘Swale Borough Council have the responsibility to control the use of the shingle bank. Why are they not carrying out these duties? At present it is an absolute mess that detracts from the enjoyment of the sea front for the vast majority of people

This morning there are 31 motorhomes AND caravans parked on the shingle bank. It will be worse at the weekend. Some people are living on the shingle bank

permanently. There are no facilities for disposal of waste or effluent. We now have a national caravan magazine saying the shingle bank is a good place to stop with a nice sea view and it is free!

As I see it SBC has three options

1. Ban vehicles from the shingle bank except for the boat launch (my choice)
2. Allow no overnight parking on the shingle bank with large fines
3. Charge £10 / night to stay there and an hourly rate for daytime use

When will the SBC take action and this problem be resolved? It has been going on for far too long with no effective action from SBC.

There are established motorhome and caravan sites available local to the shingle bank, with appropriate facilities available, such as Barton Point Coastal Park.'

'I would like to know what is being done about the numerous caravans and motorhomes that are parked continually on the Minster beach. There are no facilities there for toilet waste disposal which must be causing a hygiene and environmental issue. Surely if these caravans are allowed to park there permanently, you should be providing facilities or, alternatively, they should not be allowed to park there permanently. '

Thought I would let you know due to SBC not enforcing a no overnight stay at the Shingles the tally for caravans staying on the beach has now gone up to 16 ,when I first informed yourselves it was 3 positive proof not much room for others to enjoy this facility!!!!

Customer is upset about the amount of vans parking overnight on the shingle and nothing being enforced also the people are having fires overnight and there are nails left in the timber and not clearing up. So other cars are in danger of driving over a load of nails. They are also opening their grey water tanks they are allowing this to run into the shingle and is an environmental worry. People using the beach as a public toilet.

I was born on the Isle of Sheppey and lived there for many years until work took me further afield but I like to return regularly to visit family and friends and share the delights and beauty of the Island to my new family which I normally do in my campervan whilst staying at the amazing Shingle Beach. But on arrival last weekend I couldn't get through to use it due to barriers preventing access. When I stay for a

weekend I shop at small local stores, I eat in local restaurants or get takeaways and also share the experience with others that may not have visited before but usually return again. I find it sad that reading in the press only a few weeks back that Sheppey was disappointed to be less favourable a place to visit than the likes of Margate and Broadstairs etc only to arrive and be made to feel unwanted and treated as if I and other users of the Shingle Beach were 2nd class citizens. All motorhomes/campervans have bins and are normally owned by sensible and non-littering people. I personally have picked up McDonald wrappers and beer cans and disposed of them appropriately just so I can park up and rest assured nobody will blame me for littering. In my experience it has been young people who tend to discard their rubbish and abuse the parking facilities whilst wheel spinning up and down the roads flicking up stones. I have a stone chipped windscreen to verify this and have had to speak to groups of these people regarding both these matters. My visits will be becoming less frequent due to this decision to barrier it off as will a lot of people which will have a financial implication to the Island. I love Sheppey.....please don't make people feel unwelcome. Thank you.

The installation of width restriction barriers on minster shingle bank, this is preventing many people with larger cars, Vans and motorhomes from enjoying the shingle bank and beach in the daytime, as a local resident with a motor home , that enjoyed parking there for walks, meeting friend that also own motorhomes and going for meals or simply watching the sun set over the estuary, this has now become impossible due to the width restriction, there is now nowhere to park a motorhome year round in minster. The camping site at Bartons point has limited facilities, and is only open between April and September weather permitting, there are now parking restrictions for motorhomes along the leas, there is nowhere in minster to park between September and April, I can't see how this can help promote tourism on the island, so many other seaside towns have designated parking bays for motorhomes, usually with a charge, which would bring in income for the council, and discourage people over staying, most respectable motor home owners would be more than happy to pay, why can something like this not be done on the island? Or maybe remove the width restriction out of season between September and April when most the touring campsites are closed?

Today here are 18 caravans and at the weekend there was 32 using the shingle bank as home. There is no place for the people to place their waste and toilet waste. Also, there is no room for anyone else to use the beauty spot.

I have lived on Sheppey my entire life, the last 11 years in Sheerness and walk my small dog morning and evening through Barton's Point access road and up onto the Shingle Bank. This for me is my only down time and I look forward to my quiet walks before and after my working day.

Recently, I am sure you are aware, there have been multiple caravans and campervans permanently parked on the Shingle Bank for weeks on end, one in particular has been there for years. I never considered this an issue initially as I can sympathise with peoples housing situations, but recently the sheer quantity has multiplied and unfortunately some of the individuals are turning it into their own community that they now think they own (or should I say Shanty Town).

On one evening as I walked past the last of the many campervans, I heard a dog barking and due to the campervan door being open, it ran out of the campervan towards my small dog and me. I managed to scoop up my dog to protect him, but the large black Alsatian ran and jumped at me in an attempt to attack my dog. I managed to stand my ground, then the owner appeared from his campervan only to start swearing at me and being very intimidating. Rather than try and help me he just shouted abuse at me, I couldn't believe it. Due to the nature of the incident and my concerns if the dog attempted to attack a child I reported it to the police.

I now feel too afraid to walk on that part of the beach that I have used all my life, which to me is unacceptable. Why should I be forced to walk elsewhere considering I am a hardworking, paying, long term resident.

The beach is a public area and there to be enjoyed by all. I would imagine that many of the regular weekend visitors who enjoy the water sports will start going elsewhere rather than deal with some of these permanent residents that think they now own the area and behave in such an unpleasant manner.