

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE – 11 OCTOBER, 2006**

### **Report of the Development Control Manager**

#### **ENFORCEMENT ITEM**

**Parish: West Monkton**

1. **File/Complaint Number** E322/48/2006
2. **Location of Site** Children's Wood, Bathpool, Taunton
3. **Names of Owners** Environment Agency
4. **Names of Occupiers** Unknown

5. **Nature of Contravention**

Travellers camped within the Children's Wood

6. **Planning History**

A complaint was received in September 2006 that some travellers had entered the Children's Wood. The complainant said that there was a caravan and a number of tents on the land at the Creech Castle end of the site. They were hidden from view but people using the riverside walk felt intimidated by their presence. The Angling Association has also contacted us about the intimidation shown to the fishermen who use the banks of the river to fish and have concerns about sanitation and effects that may have on the river and wildlife. The site is managed by Taunton Deane Borough Council but is owned by the Environment Agency. They have been contacted by letter but as yet no reply has been received but the Nature Conservation and Reserves Officer has spoken with a representative who indicated that they did not consider that it was an Environment Agency problem. However as legal owners of the land any action taken by this Authority must be against the landowner.

7. **Reasons for taking Action**

It is considered that the occupation of the Children's Wood by travellers for residential accommodation has a detrimental visual and environmental impact on the area. The Local Planning Authority must ensure that this open space is available for the enjoyment of the public without fear of intimidation from unauthorised occupation of the area.

8. **Recommendation**

The Solicitor to the Council be authorised to serve an Enforcement Notice and to take prosecution action, subject to satisfactory evidence being obtained that the notice has not been complied with.

**In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.**

**CONTACT OFFICER: Mr J A W Hardy Tel: 356479**