

**IN THE MATTER OF  
AN APPLICATION FOR VILLAGE GREEN STATUS  
OF LAND AT MILLFIELD ROAD, MARKET DEEPING**

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**WITNESS STATEMENT OF BLAYNE ANTHONY HALLAM**

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1. I am Blayne Anthony Hallam, Farmer, of Thurlby Fen Farm, Long Drove Thurlby, PE10 0EJ and have lived here since I was three years old. I make this statement to support the County Council's case. This statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.
2. I have been a farmer all my working life. When I was younger I undertook extra work as a landscaper. I know Millfield Road as I went to The Deepings Show. I am aware of the layout of the housing estate off Millfield Road as I carried out a lot of the landscaping for the developer, Persimmons, and know that there are large green open spaces and walks for dog walkers around the estate.
3. Two years ago I took over the tenancy of the Site and have had two hay crops off both fields using a round baler. I did hope to be able to plough up the Site to bring it up to arable standard and would have paid more rent for it had I been able to. However English Nature claimed the soil was too thin and there was archaeology under the site even though the north field was originally arable.
4. In January or February each year I cut the hedges on both the field side and road sides removing any saplings growing out of the hedges using my tractor and this would usually take me 2 days to complete.

5. In February or March each year spread manure on the land using the manure that has been deposited throughout the year on the land. This will take approximately 2 days.
6. Currently during the spring, I spray both fields with weed control then apply a top dressing of nitrogen fertiliser, this usually takes a day to complete. In May and June the grass is cut so that it can be used as hay, this is left on the land to dry, I return to the site each day to turn the grass so that it is evenly dried out. This process usually takes approximately one week to complete.
7. When I spray I usually erect plenty of signs to warn the public that I am spraying. The signs say 'Spraying in Operation – Keep Out'. I usually spray in the evening after the surge of dog walkers have left the Site. I also do this where I farm at Langtoft due to the dog walkers.
8. The site is secured by gates but these were damaged and removed by the travellers in the summer even though they had wire across them. The main gate was badly damaged but I have welded extra metal to it and have concreted in a post to give added security.
9. When I took over the tenancy there was a wooden gate shown at A on the attached plan but all the other gates had been taken so I put up temporary stock fencing until the gates were replaced but then the travellers ruined the gates. Also at A was a no trespassing sign.
10. I have seen people climbing over the gates even though they were chained up. On a site visit on 6 December 2017 I noted that the fence at the southern boundary of the south field has had sections removed but I can't remember having seen this before so it must be fairly freshly made.
11. We did once have someone camping in a tent overnight near the gates at A.



12. I access the site through the main gates which in the summer were targeted first by the travellers but the other two gates are still used by people even though we have dug trenches on the field side across them.
13. The main activities I have seen on the two fields are dog walkers, a few joggers and mountain bikers – there are a lot of dog walkers who circuit both fields and access the site from all three gates. I have not seen anyone playing games.
14. At haymaking time the dog walkers still use the fields even walking down the centres of them. One or two have asked if they can still walk down the centre but I have told them to stick to the outside edge. Some people do trample routes through the long grass before it is cut.
15. I have told people in the past that the land is private and some have been understanding but others have been abusive.
16. I am usually at the fields during the spring and at haymaking time but keep the gates locked at all times.
17. I have machinery in the fields at haymaking but do not leave it there overnight and take about 350 round bales off the land. People still use the Site whilst we are haymaking so we have to be aware of them when using the machinery as they are all around whilst we are working.
18. The first travellers came end of May/beginning of June, leaving on 2 June originally parking up on one of the open space areas in the estate but then when they were moved off there by South Kesteven District Council and moved on to the Site. They broke through the middle gates, Gates C and parked up. When I spoke to them they said they would be leaving on the Sunday as they were on their way to Appleby Horse Fair.

19. About 2 weeks later they came back. I had put up more gates with chains and padlocks to lock them but they just ripped them off and broke two sets of gates – this is when Lincolnshire County Council became involved. Therefore I have now put up extra barriers to make it more difficult for them to get in. During this time some caravans left and then others arrived.
20. The dog walkers still used the site whilst the travellers were there although some did complain to us as the travellers were going to the toilet in the field in front of people.
21. There are issues with dog mess as people just let their dogs off to run all over the Site and many do not pick up after their dogs but the few that do then throw the bags into the brambles at the main gate way as there is no dog waste bin for them to dispose of the bags in.
22. I have thought about fencing the Site to put livestock in but have not done so due to it be earmarked for building. I have maintained the fencing when it has been broken although I have not been to the site since haymaking in May/June.
23. The Public Footpath did have a stile at the western end where it goes through to the bypass but the travellers kicked that down.
24. I am aware that the Site is earmarked for building in times to come and it's an ideal place being so close to the main roads leading to Spalding and Peterborough.
25. One person has said to me that I would still be able to cut the field for hay but that they wanted it to be a village green.

26. A lot of people do enter the Site via the Public Footpath at the main entrance but also at Gate A where they have made a way in around the gates.

27. I usually go the site when I am passing to check the gates which I would do once a month.

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed

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Dated

13 / 1 / 18 .....

