

Town and Parish Council Survey into local Van Dwellers

Privacy Statement

Introduction

Accurate data on the number of van dwellers there are in Cornwall is not available and we hope to gain a greater insight from the information you are able to provide about any van dweller sites in your area. This will help us to assess current levels of van dwelling in Cornwall and to determine if any further action is required.

Historically, van dwellers chose this life for cultural reasons but more recently, numbers have increased due to the local unaffordability and lack of housing. Being a 'van dweller' can be a positive choice for some but more negative or born from necessity for others.

Living in a van is legal. 'Vans' that are mobile, like camper or converted vans must be roadworthy, MOT'd, taxed and insured. Caravans don't, which is why they are becoming increasingly popular.

If you would like to know more about this topic we have prepared a briefing note.

Questions

1. Has your Council been made aware of any van dwellers in your Council's area over the last year?

Yes/No (skip to Q8)

2. Your Town or Parish Council area is **PORTREATH PARISH COUNCIL**

3. Please use the space below to list the location/street address where van dwellers have stayed, and indicate if you can, the frequency, numbers and if there have been any concerns raised? *(Example: 1. High Street, Somewhere. Usually 1 van with 2 occupants that stay a couple of weeks. The local community think they work in the area occasionally and stay in the van when they do. No real concerns as don't cause a nuisance and very friendly when using local shops and cafes. 2. Beach Road, Elsewhere. Lots of different vans all the time in the summer which stay from a night to a week. Generally thought of as holiday makers. Most OK but some leave a lot of litter, and we have had some reports of noise/partying late at night.)*

1. **Lighthouse Hil, Portreath TR16 4LH [///hulk.timer.couch](http://hulk.timer.couch)
Around 4 vans with approx. 3 occupants who permanently reside in this location. The area is full of rubbish, vehicle parts and damages vehicles, boats, human and dog waste. Residents feel that this area of natural beauty had been spoiled by these van dwellers. The free parking in the area is no longer accessible because of these van dwellers. Residents claim to be scared to walk in this area. Residents claim that the occupiers of the vans in partake illegal activities. Tis is one of the most frequent complaints received by the parish council.**

2. **Beach Road, Portreath B3301 ///nourished.gossiped.scornful**
Over the winter months a minimum of 2 (up to 4) vans make this stretch of road their permeant dwelling. Residents report that the impact of this is that there is a significant loss of parking as the vans usually take up the space of a minimum of three cars. Residents report that the noise from equipment such as generators and running engines causes disturbance especially at night. Residents report that waste water from the vehicles is poured onto the river bank which can include sewage.
3. **Beach Road, Portreath B3301 ///ruling.consumed.dodging**
During the summer months there are numerous vans that park mainly in the marked bay areas. These usually only stay for a few nights or a week. Residents report that the impact of this is that there is a significant loss of parking as the vans usually take up the space of a minimum of three cars.
4. **Beach Road, Portreath B3301 ///deranged.giving.tamed**
During the summer months there are numerous vans that park diagonally to the flow of traffic, these vans often protrude into the flow of traffic causing significant hazard to other road traffic. These usually only stay for a few nights or a week at a time.
5. **Penberthy Road, Portreath, TR16 4LW ///zoos.glance.share**
Over the winter months one van makes this stretch of road their permeant dwelling. Residents report that the impact of this is that there is a significant loss of parking as the vans usually take up the space of a minimum of three cars. Residents report that the noise from equipment such as generators and running engines causes disturbance especially at night. Residents report that wastewater from the vehicles is poured into storm drains which can include sewage. Residents report that the parking of large vehicles opposite residential drive ways makes manoeuvring into their properties difficult.

4. Has your Council had any contact with van dwellers in your area? (tick as many as apply):
- No (skip to Q4)
- Yes – asked how long they are staying.
- Yes – asked them to move on.
- Yes – asked them to move on and pointed them towards a more suitable parking spot.

Yes – asked them if there is anything your Council can do to help or pointed them towards agencies that can support them.

Other

None with van dwellers in locations 2, 3, 4&5.

Location 1. Whilst the council has not directly approached these van dwellers. A significant amount of work by our former Cornwall Councillor has gone into encouraging them to move on with no success.

5. What is the effect or impact on the local community? Is this impact minor, moderate or significant? Impacts can be both positive (van dwellers buy food from local shop) or negative (more difficult to park in a certain place).

Location 1. Residents feel strongly that the van dwellers in this location have a negative impact on the community. Residents report being scared to walk in this area. Residents report they are unhappy that the parking area is taken up by the van dwellers. Resident report that they are unhappy with the significant environmental impact these van dweller have on the area.

Locations 2,3, 4 & 5. The main negative impact on van dwellers in these locations is the reduction in parking. Few properties in Portreath have the benefit of off-street parking so any reduction in on street parking can have a significant effect on residents.

Secondary to this the reports of waste being thrown into onto the verges on the roadside and liquid sewage waste being thrown into stream which leads directly to the beach are unacceptable

We acknowledge that van dwellers do contribute in a small way to the local economy by using local businesses but also note that the public toilets which are funded from the parish precept are used, including for the disposal of waste water and sewerage.

6. Are you aware if any van dwellers have contacted local services? What is the effect or impact on local services, if any? Is this impact minor, moderate or significant?

No

7. Bearing in mind there are different types of van dwellers, and some may be local residents who can't afford to rent a home, do you have a view on what action your Council or other agencies could take? For example, if they only plan to stay a short time in your area, you let them.... or you make a report so that a welfare, health and educational needs assessment can be made by Cornwall Council especially if there are children involved? Would your view on what action to take be different if the van dweller was on holiday/lifestyle choice and not living permanently in their van because they have to?

Councillor have indicated that a suitable course of action would be for council officials attend any van dwellers that they receive reports of to ascertain their intentions and determine if assistance was necessary. This would be especially true if there are children present during school term times. None of these locations are suitable for permanent dwelling no matter what the circumstances are and any possible contribution to the local economy.

8. Is there anything else you would like to add?

We would welcome TRO's to prevent overnight camping in locations 2,3,4&5. We recognise the need for van dwellers to park but would prefer that places where residents parking was not at such a premium and in areas where the parking would be safer than protruding into the flow of traffic.

We would welcome support when permanent van dwellers take up residency which causes distress to the residents and harm to the environment.

We do not believe that residents would be distressed or aggrieved if van dwellers were respectful of other residents and the environment.

Many thanks for completing this survey. A response report will be added to the website after the closing date.