Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
Development Control
Council Offices Argents Mead
Hinckley
Leicestershire
Le10 1BZ

Re: An objection to the planning application 09/00207/Temp for a private gypsy caravan site for 4 caravans temporary for 3 years at Finney's Hill, Heath Road, Bagworth.

I would like to strongly object to application for a for a private gypsy caravan site for 4 caravans temporary for 3 years at Finney's Hill, Heath Road, Bagworth for the following reasons:

1) Bagworth has an extremely high population of gypsies and travellers and is stated as a 1:7 ratio with the settled community. Seven illegal and legal traveller's sites are now located along at all three main roads into the village. Despite villagers petitioning against these encampments (in particular the development at Finneys Hill, Heath Road, Bagworth) no effective action has been taken by the Borough Council to rectify this situation. This has now resulted in a breakdown of the community cohesion within the village. Many villagers are now not willing to attend any events concerning traveller issues as they strongly feel their opinions are not being considered or are taken in account concerning traveller sites in the area.

2) The proposed development is situated near a sweeping bend on Heath Rd and is used by HGVs as well as other traffic. It doesn't cater for mainly local traffic and drivers who are familiar with the Road. There are not a number of existing accesses periodically located along the road that may serve to warn drivers there is a likelihood that vehicles may be turning. This is a road where residential access would be most unexpected by other road users. The nature of the road together with the lack of street lighting contribute to the hazard that a residential access would present in this location. I personally have had to avoid a collision with a vehicle exiting this site.

3) Many villagers, including myself, feel intimated and frightened to report incidences they have experienced with local gypsies, including the inhabitants at the Finneys Hill site, as the planning application and appeal system does not prevent the identity or address details of any individual who would like to oppose an planning proposal from being accessed by the applicant even when it is requested that this information should not be revealed. This disclosure of information is preventing people from coming forward with their objections for fear of recriminations by the gypsy /traveller community.

4) I have lived in Bagworth for over 11 years and during that time the concentration of gypsy and travellers sites in/on the outskirts of our village has increased dramatically and is now out of scale with our community. Villagers feel very much overwhelmed by the traveller sites that have appeared and which have failed to be removed by the local authority. I am also fearful, like many other villagers that further illegal gypsy sites will appear around the village as many gypsies have bought land locally in the area. Often this land has been acquired by using tactics of harassment. In the case of the Finney's Hill site the land was constantly being fly-tipped for over a two year period prior to Mr Finney moving on to this land. This can be verified by the Thornton and Bagworth Parish Council who were monitoring the situation closely. This tactic is often used by travellers to irritate landowners to the point where they agree to sell land often at a reduced rate.

5) Bagworth is village with no school, no GP surgery, no Health Centre, no Dentist, no Post Office, no shop, restaurant or pub. Its community centre is dilapidated and the village sports pavilion has been condemned. It offers very few services for the elderly, young mums or children of any age and public transport to/from the village is very limited. This village is also very poorly served in terms of offering access to medical services out side of normal GP surgery opening times. Residents who require medical assistance when their local GP surgery is closed are advised to go to a walk in medical centre at Loughborough or the Leicester Royal Infirmary both of which are over 12 miles away from this village.

6) During past six years residents of Bagworth and the Local Parish Council have been petitioning against having a gypsy /traveller site at this location and relationships between the a local community have become increasingly strained with Mr Finney and his family. It is felt that this site impacts greatly on the environment particularly as its location is next to Centenary Woods, Tiger Woods and opposite Bagworth Heath Woods and a lake. I and my family have felt very intimidated when we cycled on the path which is located opposite to this site. On one occasion a dog which was unleashed ran from the site at us terrifying my children.

7) Although Bagworth is not able to offer its residents much in the way of amenities one of its major assets is the countryside that surrounds the village which is used by walkers and the local community. The application 09/00207 is for a gypsy caravan site for 4 caravans to be situated on the west side of Heath Road, Bagworth next to both The Bagworth Centenary Wood and Royal Tigers Wood, which are managed by the Woodland Trust. These woodlands lie within the National Forest and are being managed to provide places for quiet, informal recreation and to retain and enhance important wildlife habitats and landscape features. The woodland is also a living memorial to the Royal Leicestershire Regiment. In recognition of The Royal Tigers, a memorial stone and 17 different species of trees, from the various countries in which the Regiment won its battle honours, have been planted and the southern part of the site has been named after the regiment.

   Opposite the proposed Gypsy site is an area of historical significance as this was a colliery site which under landscape improvement schemes defined by the adopted Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan has been restored to rolling hills, parkland and its lakes provide a home for protected birds. The site has been sensitively landscaped with paths and

sculptures which further enhance this beautiful location and provide a recreational amenity for the public and the Bagworth Anglers Association. Given that Bagworth has very few recreational facilities to offer to its community it seems almost unconceivable that an area of such natural beauty, historical significance and home to a war memorial should ever come under the threat of temporary or permanent development for either traveller/gypsy sites or residential buildings. The proposed gypsy site should be opposed for the following reasons:

a) Bagworth is unable to provide education, health facilities or local services to meet the needs of Mr Finney and his family. The nearest school to the site (Thornton Primary School) is over subscribed so are local GP surgeries and dental practices.

b) The site is already having an adverse effect on the community of Bagworth. Over 250 petitions have been forwarded to the council opposing this site. Many residents feel intimidated to use Bagworth Centenary and Tigers Wood as they back onto Mr Finney's site and they have been watched as they walk pass site. They have also been confronted by a stray dog which is owned by the family.

c) The site has an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the country. As you approach Bagworth from Heath Rd the development is a prominent feature as it has been located on a hill. It can also be seen from the nature trails in Bagworth Heath Woods and Centenary Woods. Located on this site are a mobile bungalow, several white caravans and a portable toilet. The colour and materials used in the both mobile home, caravans, outside toilet and parking area and the way in which the site is being used creates an inappropriate visual intrusion into the open countryside.

d) The location of this site is dangerous particularly if you are travelling from Bagworth to Merry-Lees as you do not anticipate vehicles going into or exiting the site. There are no other developments along this section of road as it is woodland and part of the National Forest.. Another problem with this proposal is that as this family grows in size each caravan would need to provide space for possibly two cars. Four caravans would equate to eight vehicles and at the present time there is only a limited area for parking and manoeuvring of vehicles which could mean the site would have to be extended. At the present time the field behind the mobile bungalow has been left in its natural state and provides an area for a rich diversity of wild grasses and field flowers. This area would be destroyed if the family decided to extend the site.

e) As this is a private site all recycling/refuse would have to take place where the development meets Heath Road. At the present time no area has been provided for waste containers so they can be emptied on collection days. Also there has been no provision for a refuse lorry to park at the property to collect waste safety. In addition to this there is no pedestrian path alongside the development so collection teams would have to walk on the road to retrieve waste from this site. The road adjacent to the property is used by a variety of vehicles often travelling at

unrestricted speeds so this would pose a hazard to workmen trying to access the site. Vehicles travelling along this Heath Road would also not anticipate a refuse lorry stopping at this point in the road as the site in question is in an area of woodland isolated away from other residential developments.

To provide an area in which collection bins could be positioned and a refuse lorry could park safety would be out of character with the surrounding countryside.

f) I believe it has been requested that a landline telephone should be installed at this site along with other facilities such as broadband access. As this site is located in the heart of the countryside this could only be achieved by the erection of a mast. Obviously aerials, antennae's, masts, satellite dishes all would be out of context with the rural location of this area.

g) The applicant has also requested that if their application is successful they will provide a safe play area for their children/grandchildren and install a septic tank to the site. This could only be achieved by developing the land at the rear of the property which would damage the natural ecology of this area. The property is next to a watercourse and is surrounded by ancient hedgerows and flooded ditches. There appears to be no means of collecting surface water or foul water on this site which is very alarmingly as contaminated water is currently being transferred directly into the soil. This in turn could pollute the local watercourse which would have a devastating impact on both the aquatic and local wildlife that inhabits this environment.

h) I understand that Thornton and Bagworth Parish Council have offered Mr Finney an alternative site on Garland Lane but he has refused to take up this offer even though he knows this area very well and it is close to Nailstone School where his children are being educated and he socially gets on well with the Morrison's who owns the site on Garland Land. In fact John Finney has recently taken a plot on the new gypsy site which is located on Garlands Lane near the Costalot site along with Matt Morrison (son of Mr Morrison) who is getting married and needs a site of his own.. For the reason I feel every step has been taken to relocate this family so they do not feel ostracized from either traveller or settled community and are in close proximity of services their family need.

I urge Hinckley and Bosworth Council to protect and preserve the natural heritage of this area and conserve the rural landscape by opposing planning application 09/00207 either on a temporary or permanent basis. It is vital the historical context provided by the area, woodlands, paths and lakes remain an amenity that can be freely accessed and enjoyed by the general public.

Yours sincerely,

J Sault

For fear of intimidation I do not which my name or address to be disclosed by Hinckley and Bosworth Council to any third party. Please could you ensure my name, signature and address details are blocked out when circulating this document either in hard copy or digital format.

[redacted]
Lime Grove
Bagworth
Coalville
Leicester