

Robert Kilroy-Silk writes...on Travellers Misbehave at Bulwell

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Last Tuesday, I visited an Irish gypsy encampment parked on a cricket field in Bulwell, Nottingham to ask them why they had previously occupied a nearby school playing field and had now churned up the cricket pitch. The three women I spoke to, on the steps of a large, immaculate caravan, in the midst of dozens of kids, dogs and chickens, told me they lived on benefits, that their children were collected by Council taxis to be taken to school every day and that all the men were out cutting down trees..

They agreed with me that if someone had broken down their fences, damaged their field, disturbed their neighbourhood, they would be angry, "very angry", Marie said. She "wouldn't put up with it".

So why do we tolerate their behaviour? There is nothing wrong with people leading alternative lifestyles. It adds variety and diversity to our society. But no-one has the right to enjoy an alternative lifestyle that involves damage other people's lives and property.

And no-one has the right to live off the backs of working people and to opt out of contributing to the cost of the doctors, hospitals, schools, roads, and all the rest, that they happily enjoy.