

Kent Caravan Park Residents Face Sudden Eviction

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Residents of Elham Valley Caravan Park, near Canterbury, have been left shocked and distressed after receiving sudden eviction notices, giving them just 14 days to leave their homes. Many of those affected include veterans, vulnerable individuals, and families with children who say they have nowhere else to go.

The site, also known as Goldpark Leisure, has been home to some for over a decade. For many, it provided a stable address that enabled them to secure work after periods of homelessness. That stability is now under threat.

On Monday, residents say two men in a silver van arrived and taped notices to caravan doors, informing occupants they were trespassing and must vacate immediately. The notices, issued by Trethowans LLP on behalf of FRP Advisory, warn that possession proceedings will begin if they do not leave within the stated time.

Mark Leutert, 55, who has worked as a caretaker at the park for ten years, described the situation as “terrifying”. “We’ve got frightened people who feel hopeless,” he said. “I’ve lost my job and my home. I haven’t eaten or slept since the letter arrived.”

The park is situated between Folkestone and Canterbury, along Elham Valley Road. Residents emphasise that most did not choose caravan life for leisure but out of necessity. “We’re here because we can’t afford traditional housing,” Mr Leutert added. “What happens if 19 caravans end up on the road? Where would we go?”

The site was established in 2014 by William Smith, despite local opposition at the time. It changed hands several times, with the most recent owner being Yieldcom Limited, which went into liquidation in December 2024. FRP Advisory was appointed to manage the receivership and sell the land.

Unknown to residents, Folkestone and Hythe District Council revoked the site’s licence on 18 July, citing public safety issues including overcrowding, fire hazards, and refuse disposal problems. However, Mr Leutert disputes these claims, stating that there are only 18 or 19 caravans across 46 pitches and that rubbish is regularly taken to the local tip.

Kaz Dines, 54, expressed her fear about finding alternative housing for herself and her four dogs. Amanda Saunders, 53, who suffers from chronic health conditions, is now sleeping in her car after storm damage made her caravan uninhabitable.

“This is a quiet, supportive community,” Ms Dines said. “We help each other, it’s like a family. We’ve even welcomed people who arrived here with nothing.”

Reverend Stefan Thomas, who regularly holds services at the park, described it as a place where vulnerable people can rebuild their lives. “You’ve got people here living at the edge of

society,” he said. “If they’re evicted, where do they go? It says a lot about our society if we can’t protect the most vulnerable.”

Residents say they have always paid rent, around £9,000 in total each month, but payments stopped in May after Yieldcom’s liquidation, when it became unclear who to pay. Attempts to contact the company failed, and residents report having no communication from FRP Advisory until the eviction notices appeared.

Many are now seeking legal advice, stating they will not leave until their options have been fully explored.

The land is currently up for sale, with bids open until 22 August. FRP Advisory declined to comment, stating only that they are acting to recover funds for the secured creditor.

A spokesperson for Folkestone and Hythe District Council confirmed the licence revocation but said there were no current breaches of planning control. “A new owner would be able to apply for a new site licence once compliance is met,” they added.

The council says it has provided all occupants with advice, including contact details for homeless services. “We understand the risk of homelessness can be stressful; support is available for those who need it,” the spokesperson said.