

# Gypsy Traveller Site Handbook

Old Dalkeith Colliery, Midlothian



 East Lothian  
Council

Midlothian

## Welcome

### Welcome to Old Dalkeith Colliery Gypsy Traveller Site.

The site is situated on the boundary of East and Midlothian near the village of Whitecraig. It is managed by East Lothian Council.

Your postal address is:

Pitch \_\_\_\_  
Old Dalkeith Colliery  
Dalkeith  
Midlothian  
EH22 2LZ

This handbook lets you know about the services that are available on the site, your occupancy rights and responsibilities and gives you useful contact information.



## Site facilities

The site has 20 pitches and is open all year round.

Each pitch has:

- its own hard standing for parking a caravan and one other motor vehicle
- an amenity block with a toilet and shower/bath, kitchen area
- a hook-up facility to provide electricity to your caravan.

None of the pitches are currently adapted for use by people with disabilities. However, our Occupational Therapy service can provide advice and assistance with this. Please contact the Site Manager for further information.

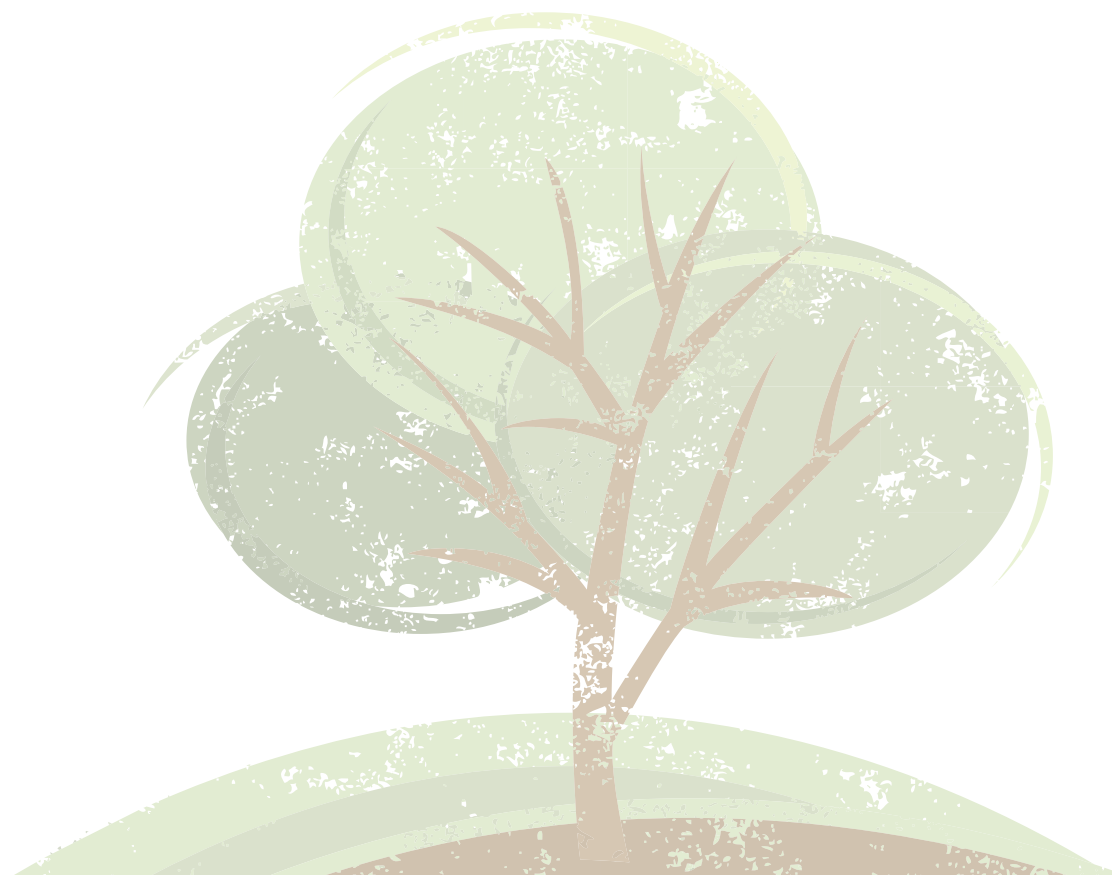


There is also a small play area for children.

## Local facilities

The nearest shop and post office are situated in Whitecraig. Please ask the Site Manager about the larger supermarkets that are situated in Edinburgh, Musselburgh and Dalkeith.

The nearest petrol station is situated at Granada Services (off the A1 near Old Craighill Junction, by Musselburgh).



## Site Manager



Keith 'Dusty' Miller is the Site Manager.

Dusty is available:

Monday – Tuesday: 9am-5pm

Wednesday: 11am-5pm

Friday: 9am-4pm

He can be contacted either at the site office on 0131 654 2095 or by emailing [kmiller1@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:kmiller1@eastlothian.gov.uk)

Appropriate arrangements will be made to provide cover in Dusty's absence.

Dusty is responsible for the day to day management of the site including:

- inspecting the site and making sure it is kept clean, tidy and safe
- advising residents on their occupancy agreement
- making sure that residents stick to the conditions of their occupancy agreement and taking action if they don't
- dealing with any unauthorised entry to the site
- helping residents with written documents and forms (such as benefit forms)
- providing information about nurseries, schools, doctors, dentists and other local services.

**In emergencies after normal working hours, please call 01875 612 818.**





## Independent advice and support

Shelter is a specialist housing charity that provides information, advice, advocacy and support. They can help you with:

- advice and support on accommodation issues
- getting access to services in the local community access to benefits advice (including help with filling in forms)
- writing letters
- contacting other agencies.



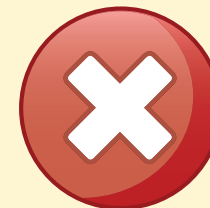
Mhairi Craig of Shelter can be contacted on 0344 515 2526 or 07824 591 853.

## How do I get a pitch?

We keep a waiting list for the site and pitches are given in line with East Lothian Council's Allocations Policy. The Site Manager will provide you with an application form along with information about applying for a pitch.

We have the right to refuse applications from people who:

- did not pay their rent for a previous stay on a council site or tenancy
- have had problems staying at a council site or tenancy in the past, for example antisocial behaviour.



This is not a complete list of reasons why we would refuse entry to the site. For more information contact Dusty Miller.

If you would rather set-up a home or Traveller Site on land that you own, we will provide you with information and advice for an application for planning permission.

## Your occupancy agreement

If we allocate you a pitch we will also provide you with an occupancy agreement.

This is a legal contract between you and East Lothian Council that sets out your rights and responsibilities. Please keep this in a safe place.

We will explain the occupancy agreement and site rules to you before you move to your pitch.



If you have a question about your occupancy agreement, please ask the Site Manager for help.

## Ending your occupancy agreement

To end your occupancy agreement you must give us 7 days written notice.

We will carry out an inspection of the pitch and amenity block before the end of the occupancy agreement. We will then tell you about any repairs you must carry out and what else you should do before moving out of your pitch.

## Rent

Our rent levels are set to cover the costs of managing and maintaining the site.

Your rent also includes council tax. It is charged fortnightly and must be paid in advance. There are a number of ways you can pay your rent and these will be explained to you when you sign your occupancy agreement. You may qualify for housing benefit to cover some or all of your rent. To find out if you do, contact Dusty or Mhairi at Shelter.

The rent is reviewed annually to make sure that it meets our costs and is affordable. We will consult you about any proposed increase before we make our decision. You will be given at least four weeks notice of any increase.



## Problems paying your rent

If you are having problems paying your rent it is important that you discuss this with the Site Manager who can provide you with help and assistance.

Please remember that it is your responsibility to keep your rent up to date. Although we are sympathetic if you are experiencing a temporary difficulty, paying your rent is a condition of staying at the site. We will take action against any occupant who does not pay their rent or keep-up with arrangements to repay rent arrears.

Non-payment of rent is a serious matter and one of the grounds under which we can seek to recover possession of your pitch. Speak to us as soon as you can to avoid being evicted and losing your pitch. We may be able to help.

## Repairs

The Site Manager inspects the site on a regular basis. You can also report any repairs needed to the site and the amenity blocks to the Site Manager or directly to the Repairs Contact Centre on 01875 824 311.

You can also report repairs or check on the progress of an existing repair by emailing [housingrepairs@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:housingrepairs@eastlothian.gov.uk)



How we deal with a repair and the priority it is given will depend on the type of repair. Our repair categories and response times are:

- Emergency: 24 hours
- Normal: 23 working days.

## Re-chargeable repairs

We will not recharge you for any damage through fair wear and tear. However, you are responsible for any damage that you, your householders or visitors have caused. This applies whether the damage was on purpose or the result of an accident or lack of care. If we carry out a repair for such damage, then you must pay for it.

We will provide you with a copy of the Guide to the Repairs and Maintenance Policy when you sign your occupancy agreement.

## Respect for others

We believe that everyone should be able to enjoy a peaceful life in their home. In order to create a peaceful site to live in, neighbours must respect each other's background, belief and lifestyle.

Antisocial behaviour is any behaviour, which may harm the quality of life of others on the site. It includes excessive noise, theft, vandalism and drug dealing.

Harassment is the deliberate interference with the peace, comfort or safety of any person. Harassing anyone on the grounds of race, colour, religious belief, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability or ethnic origin is a breach of the occupancy agreement.

Please remember that you are responsible for the behaviour of every person (including children) living or visiting your home. Any pets must also be kept under control.

If you are experiencing antisocial behaviour or harassment (including from someone not resident on the site), please contact the Site Manager who will provide help and assistance.



## Site safety

Site safety is very important. Please follow the simple rules below:

- petrol, diesel or paraffin must not be stored on the site
- all flammable liquids and gas containers must be kept outside caravans and amenity blocks
- engine oil or other similar liquids must not be disposed of on the site
- open fires or the burning of vehicles, tyres or other materials are not allowed
- empty gas cylinders must be removed from your pitch
- a proper power line must be used to connect up electricity to your caravan
- vehicles must keep within the speed limit of 5 mph on site
- ensure access to the site at all times
- you are responsible for your own gas appliances and you should get them regularly checked.



Basic fire safety and evacuation information will be provided when you sign your occupancy agreement. It is also available on the notice board beside the site office.

## Insurance

We will insure the amenity blocks and infrastructure of the site but you need to insure your own caravan, vehicles, furniture and contents. The council also runs its own affordable insurance scheme. Advice and application forms are available from the Site Manager.

## Refuse collection

Domestic rubbish is collected from the site every Friday. Please ensure you use the bin provided. We also offer a special collection service to remove bulky items. There is a charge for this service.

The nearest recycling centre is located at Kinwegar Recycling Centre, A199 Haddington Road (near Wallyford Toll) Wallyford. It is open seven days a week:

**Summer (1st April to 30th September) 8.30am-6.30pm**  
**Winter (1st October to 31st March) 8.30am-4.15pm.**



## Post

Your post will be delivered to an individual post box next to the site office. You will be allocated a post box when you sign your occupancy agreement. You are responsible for the post box and will have to supply your own padlock.



## Electricity

Electricity power cards can be purchased from the Site Manager or from the Brunton Hall in Musselburgh for £5.

## Customer Care

We want to provide you with a high quality service. We will provide you with a copy of our Customer Care Service Standards when you sign your occupancy agreement. These outline the level of service that you can expect from us.

## Improving the service and getting involved

Please tell us if you have any comments, suggestions or complaints about our services. They give us important feedback on how we are performing and how we can improve our service. You can also get involved in other ways such as attending resident meetings or site walkabouts with staff.

## Access to information

We aim to keep you well informed about our services and activities. The office notice board displays relevant information and we will also send you a quarterly newsletter.

If you wish to have access to your file or want more information about the council, please speak to the Site Manager.

Information held about you is confidential and will not be given to anyone who does not need, or have a right, to know.

## Equal Opportunities

We are committed to equal opportunities for all and have an Equal Opportunities Policy.

For more information on any of the above please speak to the Site Manager.

## Useful contact telephone numbers

East Lothian Council	
(during office hours)	01620 827 827
(emergency outside office hours)	01875 612 818
Site Manager's Office	0131 654 2095

### Council services

Adult Social Care Service	0845 603 1576
<i>(including Occupational Therapy)</i>	
Antisocial Behaviour hotline	0845 601 8518
Customer Feedback Manager	01620 827 497
<i>(complaints, compliments and suggestions)</i>	
Homeless advice <i>(freephone 24 hours)</i>	0800 169 1611
Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit	01620 827 827
Local Housing Office <i>(Tranent &amp; Musselburgh)</i>	01620 827 827
Repairs contact centre	0845 602 2223
Social Work Emergency Service	0800 731 6969
<i>(out of hours only)</i>	
Welfare Rights <i>(independent advice)</i>	0131 653 5230
Waste Services <i>(special uplifts)</i>	01875 824 305

### Health services

Community Nurse	0131 536 9844
GP surgery <i>(Dalkeith)</i>	0131 561 5500
NHS 24	08454 242 424

### Other services

Citizens Advice Bureau	
Haddington	01620 824 471
Musselburgh	0131 653 2544
Crimestoppers	0800 555 111
East Lothian Energy Efficiency Advice Centre <i>(freephone)</i>	0800 51 2012
East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel	0131 665 9304
<i>(umbrella organisation for tenants and residents associations in East &amp; Midlothian)</i>	
East Lothian Women's Aid	0131 665 9552
Mid and East Lothian Drugs (MELD)	0131 660 3566
<i>(support for drug misuse)</i>	
Police <i>(emergency)</i>	999
Shelter	0344 515 2526
<i>(independent housing information, advice and support)</i>	
Education services	
Education <i>(provided by Midlothian Council)</i>	0131 270 7500
Dalkeith High School	0131 654 4701
St David's High School, Dalkeith	0131 564 4702
Woodburn Primary School, Dalkeith	0131 663 2556



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