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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Riverside Gardens Barrier is “De-fence” Against Illegal Camping**

New fencing has been installed at the Bridport’s Riverside Gardens, following two recent unauthorised traveller encampments.

Bridport Town Council has acted to prevent illegal use of Riverside Gardens by traveller encampments, by installing new fencing along the Sea Road North boundary. July and August saw two encampments arrive in the gardens, and although the Council moved quickly to evict them there were concerns that the site could be subject to ongoing abuse.

Council Leader Cllr Sarah Williams said the measures were necessary to protect the gardens for general community use, and that a dedicated site was available for use by travellers. “The Council understands the need for traveller groups to find somewhere to stay, but public gardens are just not appropriate places. Riverside Gardens are for everyone’s enjoyment and not for exclusive use by any visiting group, and of course there just aren’t the facilities there for camping. There is a dedicated travellers’ site at Piddlehinton, less than 20 miles away which is under-used and we would encourage travellers to make use of it.”

Cllr Williams said that the fencing should not be seen as ‘anti-traveller’. “We have nothing at all against the travelling lifestyle, and we are sure that the vast majority of travellers do not set up camp in inappropriate places. We’re just protecting community land from the few who do.”

The new fencing on the Sea Road North boundary of the gardens is separate from the cycle route works through Riverside Gardens, which were carried out by Dorset County Council.

Two more encampments at Flood Lane in Bridport in the same period were on land owned and managed by Dorset County Council.

ENDS

Enclosures:

- Photo of the new fencing on Sea Road North, nearing completion (gate to be installed when concrete properly set).
- Photo of traveller encampment in August 2018.



Contact for Riverside Gardens/Bridport Town Council:

- Will Austin, Town Clerk, Bridport Town Council. Email [WAustin@bridport-tc.gov.uk](mailto:WAustin@bridport-tc.gov.uk) or tel 01308 456722.

Contact for Flood Lane:

- Media enquiries – Dorset County Council Comms Team. Email [comms@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:comms@dorsetcc.gov.uk) or Tel 01305 221000.
- Dorset County Council Property Maintenance Helpdesk - West Area. Email [property.helpdesk@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:property.helpdesk@dorsetcc.gov.uk) or tel 01305 225298.