



MELLISHAW PARK

GYPSY AND TRAVELLERS SITE



RESIDENT HANDBOOK



Welcome To Mellishaw Park Gypsy and Traveller Site

Dear Resident,

Welcome to Mellishaw Park Gypsy and Traveller Site on behalf of Lancaster City Council.

The site is situated at the junction of Mellishaw Lane and Lancaster Road in Heaton with Oxcliffe near Lancaster, and a 5-min walk from Salt Ayre Leisure Centre.

During 2023/2024, the site has been extensively refurbished providing new pitches, amenity space and day rooms.

This handbook provides you with important information you will need to know whether you're a resident who has lived here before or a new resident to the site.

If there is something you think should be included which we have missed, please let your Housing Officer know when they visit.

Jo Wilkinson
Chief Officer – Housing and Property



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Site Management

The housing management team within Council Housing is responsible for managing the Mellishaw Park site, while our Repairs and Maintenance Service ensures the site is well-maintained. The Estate Caretaker conducts daily site inspections and reports any repairs and maintenance issues in the communal areas to the Council Housing reception team.

Housing Officer

Lorraine Robinson and Janine Camm serve as the Housing Officers for Mellishaw Park, acting as the primary points of contact for residents and Lancaster City Council. They are responsible for a patch of estates that includes the Mellishaw Park site.

Their role involves advising residents on the terms of their pitch agreements and taking appropriate action when a breach occurs, which may involve working alongside the Community Safety Officer (Joe Frith), depending on the nature of the breach. They also handle unauthorised entry to the site, deal with complaints from residents about site issues, consult with residents regarding any changes to the site or services provided, work with other agencies to resolve residents' issues, and signpost residents to other services when needed.

Estate Caretaker

Janet Kelly, the part-time Estate Caretaker, lives on-site and works Monday to Friday from 9am to 1pm. Her role involves ensuring the site is clean and tidy, reporting repairs and maintenance issues in the communal areas, keeping the communal areas neat and free of litter, and informing residents if they breach the terms of their pitch agreement, reporting any breaches to the Housing Officer.

The Caretaker also checks that caravans are positioned correctly within each pitch and maintain the required distance from neighbouring caravans to meet fire safety regulations. If these requirements are not met, the caretaker will report the issue to the housing management team.

Compliance Officer

Our Compliance Officer conducts monthly site inspections to assess any potential health and safety risks. Additionally, the Housing Management team carries out a site walkabout twice a year to identify environmental problems. Residents are welcome to attend these walkabouts, along with other attendees such as local Councillors or other agencies. However, if you notice any issues, please report them as soon as possible rather than waiting for these visits, so we can address them promptly.



Pitch Amenities 1/3

In this section, we'll provide you with key information about your new home at Mellishaw Park.

As a resident, it's essential to understand the various aspects of your living space and the surrounding area. We'll cover important topics such as the proper way to address your pitch for deliveries and service registrations, as well as the nearby amenities that will make your life more convenient.

Receiving Mail & Deliveries

When having items delivered or registering for services that require a postal address, please use the following format:

**[YOUR PITCH NUMBER]
Mellishaw Park Travellers Site
Lancaster Road
Heaton with Oxcliffe
Morecambe
LA3 3FZ**

By using this standardised format, you can ensure that your mail and deliveries reach you promptly and accurately. Be sure to replace "[YOUR PITCH NUMBER]" with the actual number of your assigned pitch.

Local Amenities

Mellishaw Park is conveniently located near several amenities:

- The closest supermarket and petrol station is Asda, which can be found on Ovangle Road, just a short distance from the site.
- Salt Ayre Leisure Centre is situated between Asda and the County Council-operated household waste recycling centre, providing residents with access to recreational facilities.
- The nearby White Lund Industrial Estate is home to a wide range of companies offering various services, including automotive repair, safe-storage facilities, hardware retail, and many more, making it a convenient location for residents to access these services.



Pitch Amenities 2/3



Living Space

Each pitch at Mellishaw Park is equipped with a highly insulated day room that residents can furnish to create a comfortable living space. The pitch also includes a lobby and utility area, providing ample storage space and room for installing washing machines and condensing tumble-dryers. Please note that non-condensing dryers are not permitted.

The day room features a wet room with a shower, wash-hand basin, and water closet, as well as a kitchen area with base units, a sink, and designated spaces for residents to install their own cookers and fridges. A TV aerial point is provided in each plot, along with a reinforced section of internal wall to facilitate the installation of a wall-mounted TV.

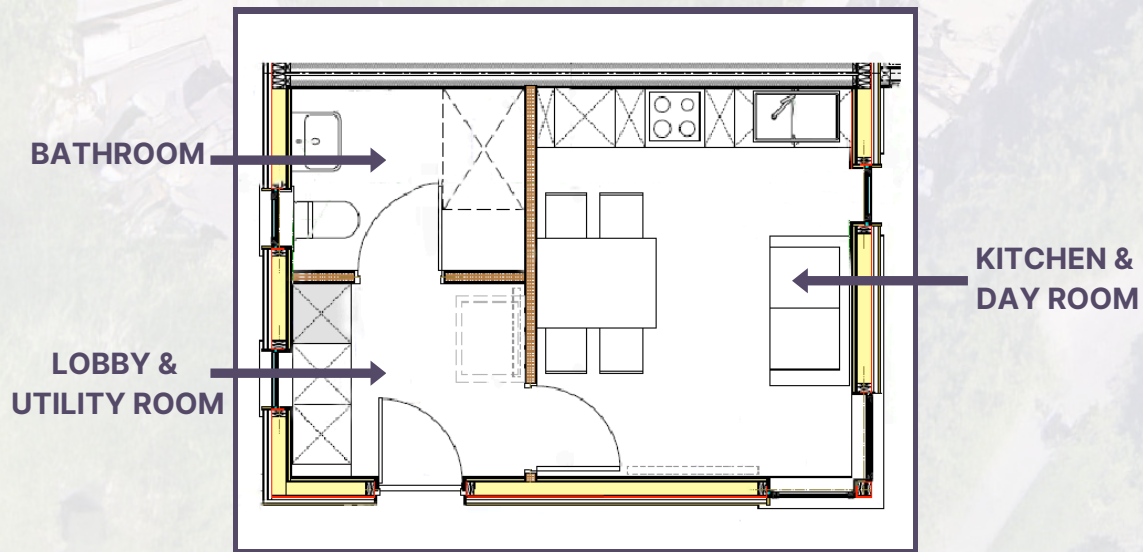
For maintenance purposes, each day room has a locked loft access hatch, but access is restricted to authorised site personnel.

Parking

Each pitch provides space for one caravan (not exceeding 28 feet in length) and up to two additional motor vehicles.



Pitch Amenities 3/3



Electricity

Electrical provisions are available inside each day room and via external caravan hookup points. Every pitch has its own electric meter, located in the meter room attached to pitch 19. Residents are responsible for arranging and paying their electricity bills with their chosen supplier.

You can select a new electricity supplier by contacting them to initiate the supply transfer for your meter at Mellishaw Park. Choose to receive quarterly bills, set up direct debit, or request a pay-as-you-go SMART meter to top up credit online or by phone.

When choosing a supplier, consider benefits like the absence of standing charges or cheaper tariffs during specific times. Comparing deals on price comparison sites can help you find the best option.

Heating & Ventilation

Each day room is equipped with electric heaters in all three areas, which can be controlled independently for your comfort. To ensure proper ventilation, each day room is fitted with a ventilation system that includes a central vent for the lobby/utility room and wet room, as well as an independent extract fan serving the kitchen area. These systems must remain operational at all times.



Site Infrastructure

Visitor Parking

In addition to the two parking spaces provided on each pitch, there are two visitor parking spaces located next to pitch 19 (caretaker's pitch). To maintain clear access for vehicles moving around the site and to ensure emergency vehicles can enter when needed, parking on the roads or in turning areas within the site is strictly forbidden.

Children's Recreation Area

A grassed recreational space, designated as a children's play area, can be found at the rear of the site, providing a safe and enjoyable environment for children to play.

Site Barrier

At the entrance of the site, a double barrier has been installed. The upper barrier will typically remain locked at all times and will only be opened upon request. To arrange access, please contact Council Housing. Residents have the option to lock the lower barrier as and when required. Before attempting to enter, please ensure that your vehicle can pass through the upper barrier.

CCTV

For the safety and security of residents, CCTV cameras have been installed at the site entrance.

Fencing

The metal fencing that surrounds the site marks its boundaries and must not be breached or tampered with under any circumstances.

Flood Risk Management

As a precautionary measure, a flood risk management procedure has been developed to provide guidance on what to do in the unlikely event that the site experiences flooding.

It is important to note that during the refurbishment of the site, the entire site level was raised, and a raised entrance point was created, significantly reducing the risk of flooding compared to the site's previous state.

In the event that you become aware of flooding on the site, please raise the alarm by ringing the designated flood bell located near the electrical substation to alert other residents, and immediately contact Lancaster City Council for further assistance.



Waste Management 1/2

Refuse Collection

Each pitch is provided with three wheelie bins, which are stored in a designated area at the front of the pitch. These bins are intended for the following waste categories:

- **General Waste.**
- **Paper & Cardboard.**
- **Glass, Plastic, and Tins/Cans.**

Residents are responsible for taking their wheelie bins to the designated refuse collection area near the site entrance and retrieving them after the refuse has been collected. Upon moving into the site, you will be informed of the specific days for each type of waste collection.

In partnership with local re-use charity Furniture Matters, Lancaster City Council offers a bulky waste collection service. This service not only assists you in disposing of unwanted household items but also supports local disadvantaged individuals and the environment.

To learn more or to schedule a collection, please contact Furniture Matters at **01524 582491** or visit **www.lancaster.gov.uk/bins-recycling/bulky-household-item-collection**.

Chemical Toilet Disposal Unit (Elsan Point)

A dedicated wastewater point, located next to Pitch 19 (caretaker's pitch), is available for disposing of wastewater from touring caravans. A tap is provided above the Elsan point for cleaning receptacles.

Septic Tank

Lancaster City Council's appointed septic tank maintenance contractor will conduct quarterly inspections to maintain the enclosure surrounding the tank and assess if emptying is necessary.

Residents can report any issues with the septic tank following the standard repairs process.

While the septic system is designed to handle all waste waters, we kindly request that residents avoid excessive discharge from washing machines or dishwashers.



Waste Management 2/2

To ensure the proper functioning of the septic system, the following items must never be disposed of through the septic tank or drainage system:

- **Waste from chemical toilets**
- **Disposable nappies, sanitary items, plastics, or other large solids**
- **Paints, petrol, acetone, methylated spirits, paraffin, or any other solvents**
- **Oils, fats, or any other heavy greases that can solidify inside the pipes**
- **Chemical discharges (including cleaning agents)**
- **Roof or surface water**

Introducing inappropriate items into the septic tank or its connected drains can significantly impact the efficiency of the septic system and its ability to manage surface water via the site's soakaway system.

These items can cause blockages or eliminate the beneficial bacteria responsible for digesting waste, necessitating more frequent tank emptying.

To maintain the optimal performance of the septic system, we kindly ask residents to refrain from using their toilets or kitchen sinks as receptacles for general waste.

Additionally, we strongly recommend minimising the use of disinfectants, acids, bleaches, chlorine, and strong detergents, as these substances can disrupt the delicate balance within the septic tank.

Whenever possible, please use domestic cleaning products that are labeled as "septic tank friendly."

Please note that residents are not permitted to access the septic tank enclosure for any purpose, including the keeping of animals. We appreciate your cooperation in these matters.



Repairs & Maintenance

Reporting Repairs

If you need to report a repair, there are several convenient methods available:

- Phone: Call **01524 582929** between 9:00am and 5:00pm Monday-Friday (on Wednesdays, the hours are 10:00am to 5:00pm).
- Email: Send an email to chreception@lancaster.gov.uk.
- Online: Visit www.lancaster.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/repairs to report the issue.
- In-person: Stop by one of our Town Halls during opening hours.

If an emergency repair is needed outside of the above-mentioned hours or on a Public/Bank holiday, please call **01524 67099**.

Re-chargeable Repairs

Under certain circumstances, residents will be responsible for paying for repairs, known as "rechargeable repairs." These are defined as a repair that is necessary due to deliberate damage or neglect caused by the tenant, their family, or visitors to the site.

When reporting the issue or during a pre-inspection when vacating a plot, the customer will be informed if the repair will be rechargeable. You may be "re-charged" for the cost of repairs in the following situations:

- You, a visitor to the Site, or your Dayroom have caused damage that exceeds normal 'wear and tear'.
- You have neglected your day room or pitch.
- You have carried out unauthorised work.
- You have caused damage while completing your own improvements.
- Your pet has caused damage.
- We had to gain access to your living area, because you do not have a key yourself.
- By being aware of these guidelines, you can help maintain the condition of your day room and pitch, and avoid incurring unnecessary repair costs.



Fire Safety & Anti-Social Behaviour

Fire Safety

At Mellishaw Park, fire safety is of the utmost importance and we urge all residents to familiarise themselves with the guidelines below to ensure the well-being of all residents. If you discover a fire, please follow these steps:

1. Evacuate: Ensure that everyone in the vicinity is safely evacuated. Make sure to assist any individuals who may require help, such as children, elderly, or disabled persons.
2. Raise the alarm: Alert your neighbours and other residents on the site about the fire.
3. Call the Fire Service: Dial **999** and request the Fire Service and provide them with clear information about the fire, including its location and any other relevant details.
4. Await further instructions: Do not attempt to re-enter the area until it has been declared safe by the Fire Service.

To prevent fires, open fires are strictly prohibited anywhere on the site, including bonfires, campfires, and the burning of waste materials.

Residents are not permitted to store petrol or other flammable materials on the site, except for fuel stored in vehicle storage tanks, to minimise the risk of fire.

We encourage residents to regularly check their caravans and day rooms for potential fire hazards. If you identify any issues or have concerns about fire safety, please contact the site management team immediately.

Anti-Social Behaviour

At Lancaster City Council, we understand the negative impact that anti-social behaviour (ASB) can have on the lives of our residents and the wider community. We are committed to addressing these issues whenever possible. However, it is important for complainants and victims of ASB to understand the circumstances in which we can intervene and the tools and powers available to us.

Please be aware that we will not raise expectations or promise to take action when we are unable to do so, or when the responsibility and power to address the situation lies with another authority.

Rest assured that we will handle reports of ASB with the utmost confidentiality whenever possible. In the event that confidentiality cannot be maintained, we will inform you of the situation. If you need to make a report, please call us at **01524 582929**.



Pitch Allocation



Applying For a Pitch

To apply for a pitch at Mellishaw Park, you must first register on Lancaster City Council's housing waiting list. The registration process can be completed online by visiting <https://lancaster.locatapro.org/onlineform>.

If you already have an existing application that was submitted before **8th April 2024**, you will need to re-register using the Locata system at the website mentioned above. Rest assured that any waiting time you have accrued on the housing register from when your original application was made active will be retained.

Should you require assistance with completing the new housing application, please feel free to contact the Ideal Choice Homes team. You can reach them via email at challocations@lancaster.gov.uk or by telephone at **01524 582005**. They will be more than happy to guide you through the process.

All applications will be carefully assessed in accordance with the Council's Housing Allocation Policy. To be considered for a plot, applicants must meet the necessary qualifying criteria and have an active application on file.

Please note that pitches at Mellishaw Park will not be advertised for let. Instead, they will be offered directly to the individual on our waiting list who has been waiting the longest and has expressed interest in this specific location, regardless of their banding.



Pitch Agreement 1/2

Upon allocating you a pitch, Lancaster City Council will provide you with a Pitch Agreement. This legal contract outlines your rights and responsibilities as a resident of Mellishaw Park. It is important to keep this document in a safe place for future reference.

Before you move to your pitch, we will explain the pitch agreement and site rules to ensure you have a clear understanding of the expectations. The rules in the agreement are derived from legal requirements, alongside additional provisions set forth by the Council to ensure that Mellishaw Park remains a safe, comfortable environment for all residents.

Residents should pay particular attention to the following key points:

- Each pitch is permitted to have one static mobile home, not exceeding 28 feet in length, and must be either a single touring caravan or two touring caravans.
- A minimum clearance of 3 metres must be maintained from the boundary fences, and there should be at least 6 metres of space between the resident's caravan/static and any neighbouring plot's caravan/static. All caravans should comply with the latest safety standards (British Standard 3632:2023).
- Residents are allowed to park a maximum of two personal vehicles on their pitch at any given time. The registration plates of these vehicles must be provided to the Council within 7 days of keeping them on the pitch.
- The costs of utilities such as electricity and internet are the responsibility of the residents, who will need to make their own arrangements for these services.
- Residents are required to complete the list of occupiers at the end of the agreement and promptly inform the Council of any changes to this information.
- Under no circumstances should the day rooms be used for sleeping or as bedrooms.
- Open fires are strictly prohibited on the Site.
- To prevent blockages and problems with the Site's septic tank, only toilet roll should be flushed down the toilets. Nappies, sanitary products, wipes, and any other materials must be disposed of in the provided bins.
- Residents are permitted to keep up to two well-behaved dogs, cats, or small caged birds. If residents wish to have more, they must seek permission from the Council.
- It is the responsibility of the residents to insure their caravans and personal belongings.



Pitch Agreement 2/2

Ending Your Pitch Agreement

To terminate your pitch agreement, you or your representative must provide Council Housing with a minimum of four weeks' written notice. A form is available for this purpose, which you can obtain from your Housing Officer upon request.

Once the notice to terminate a pitch agreement is received, we will schedule an appointment to inspect the pitch, including the day room, before your departure. We will inform you in writing of any repairs that fall under your responsibility and any potential recharges.

Please ensure that you remove all your belongings before vacating the pitch. Any items left behind will be disposed of by the Council, and you will be charged for the cost of removal.

Council-Initiated Termination

In cases where the Council seeks to end your pitch agreement due to reasons such as non-payment of rent or nuisance to neighbours, we will first notify you in writing of our intention to take legal action by serving a Notice to Quit.

The Council will decide whether or not to proceed with court action based on the events following the service of the notice. You will have the opportunity to present your side of the story in court, and the judge will ultimately decide whether eviction is warranted.

If you find yourself in this situation, you can seek advice from the Citizen's Advice Bureau or a solicitor.

Pitch Insurance

Lancaster City Council will insure the day rooms and infrastructure of Mellishaw Park. However, residents are responsible for insuring their own caravans, vehicles, furniture, and personal belongings.

To help residents secure affordable insurance, the Council provides its own insurance scheme. If you would like more information about this option or wish to apply, please contact your Housing Officer, who will gladly offer advice and provide you with the necessary application forms.



Pitch Fees & Service Charges

Your pitch fee is due every week in advance. If you choose to pay fortnightly or monthly, you must pay in advance, including if you receive assistance from Universal Credit for your housing costs.

You can pay your pitch fee through various methods:

- **Direct Debit:** Contact us to set up a Direct Debit by calling [phone number].
- **Standing Order:** Contact us to obtain a standing order form.
- **Post Office:** Pay by cash, cheque, debit card, or credit card at any Post Office branch.
- **Payzone:** Pay by cash, debit card, or credit card at any Payzone outlet, which can be found in many shops, petrol stations, and pubs in the area.
- **Telephone:** Pay your rent 24/7 by calling our automated telephone payment line.
- **Online:** Pay your rent online using a debit card, credit card, or Paypal.

To learn more about these payment methods, please call us on **01524 582540** or visit <https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/rent-and-service-charges>.

If you fail to pay your pitch fee and service charges, we can seek legal permission from the court to evict you. If you are struggling to make payments, please contact your Income Officer immediately – we are here to help!

What are Service Charges?

At Mellishaw, service charges generally cover services such as caretaking costs, grounds maintenance, CCTV, and pest control, and are calculated to recover the costs of providing these services. We will always inform you in advance of any changes, providing a breakdown of the costs, and how the money is spent throughout the year.

What are 'No Collection' Weeks?

During each year, there are four 'no collection' weeks, meaning your normal pitch fee and charges are not due during those weeks. However, if you are in arrears, you should continue to make payments. We will inform you each year of the 'no collection' weeks.

If we need to increase your pitch fee and/or service charge, we will provide at least 28 days' written notice. We will write to you each March regarding any changes.



Getting Involved

At Mellishaw Park, we value your input and want you to have a say in how the Council delivers services to you and your community. We believe that by working together, we can create a living environment that meets your needs and exceeds your expectations.

If you have any ideas or suggestions on how you would like to influence the way the Council serves you and your neighbours, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

We want to hear from you about what matters most to your community and how the Council can support you in making Mellishaw Park a great place to live.

There are several ways you can get involved:

- **Tenants' Voice Group:** This is a tenant-led group that meets with Council Officers and Ward Councillors to oversee and contribute to the way services are delivered to all tenants across the District. By joining this group, you can have a direct impact on decision-making processes that affect your community.
- **Mellishaw Residents Group:** If you're interested in ensuring that the voice of your community is heard and that the Council is delivering services that meet your needs, consider joining the Mellishaw Residents Group. This group provides a platform for residents to discuss issues, share ideas, and work together to improve life at Mellishaw Park.
- **Mellishaw Park Walkabout:** Twice a year, we conduct a walkabout of the site to assess its condition and identify areas that may need attention or improvement. Your Housing Officer will inform you of the dates for these walkabouts, and we encourage you to participate and provide feedback.
- **Scrutiny Panel:** As a member of this group, you'll have the opportunity to delve into specific areas of the housing service and make recommendations for improvement. Training and support will be provided to help you effectively contribute to this important work.

If you would like more information on how to get involved or have any questions, please contact our Community Engagement Officer Rachael Harland by calling **01524 582929**, or emailing rharland@lancaster.gov.uk.



Complaints

At Lancaster City Council, we aim to provide top-quality service. However, we know issues may arise occasionally. We see complaints as valuable opportunities to improve our services to better meet your needs.

If you have a concern, please contact our customer service centres in person at any Town Hall, by calling **01524 582000**, using our online form, or emailing **complaints@lancaster.gov.uk**. Our team will ensure your complaint is addressed by the appropriate officer.

Contact Us

Our Customer Service team is available to help you with any issues you may have by phone at **01524 582929** or by email at **councilhousing@lancaster.gov.uk**.

In case of emergencies outside of regular business hours, please call our out-of-hours emergency number: **01524 67099**.

To contact Mellishaw Park's officers directly:

- **Housing Officer:** You can reach our Housing Officers by phone at **01524 582929** or via email at **housingofficers@lancaster.gov.uk**.
- **Community Safety Officer:** Our Community Safety Officers can be contacted by phone at **01524 582929** or through email at **chasb@lancaster.gov.uk**.
- **Energy Support Officer:** For assistance with energy-related matters, call our Energy Support Officers at **01524 582929** or email them at **councilhousing@lancaster.gov.uk**.
- **Income Management Officer:** If you have questions about financial matters, you can reach our Income Management Officers by phone at **01524 582541** or via email at **chincomemanagementteam@lancaster.gov.uk**.

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