# Glastonbury faces squatting challenges amid housing disputes



The town of Glastonbury in Somerset, often characterised for its vibrant, alternative lifestyle, is currently facing a significant challenge regarding the management of squatting in the area. Chris Black, the owner of the Zig Zag site, has publicly stated that he believes the local council has squandered “millions” in its efforts to evict squatters from his property. Despite an enforcement order mandating the removal of all caravans, Black asserts that compliance with this ruling is neither achievable nor fair.

The Zig Zag site, a former factory that Black has owned since 2013, has been a home and community hub for over a decade. Following a recent ruling in July 2024, the Planning Inspectorate upheld the council’s claim that the site is “not fit for human habitation,” leading to an order for the occupants to vacate. Despite this, Black insists that a compromise could have been reached without resorting to costly legal action, which he claims has led to unnecessary expenditure for both parties involved.

“There are now more than 300 caravans in Glastonbury,” Black remarked, emphasising the urgent need for a sensible management plan that avoids creating homelessness. With approximately 23 people originally resident in Zig Zag, Black noted that fewer than ten now remain, with some having successfully relocated. He expressed concern for those who are unable to move, asserting that “I’m not going to make people intentionally homeless,” and urged the council to take responsibility for assisting these individuals in finding other accommodation.

In response to these developments, a spokesperson for Somerset Council acknowledged the complexities of the situation. They asserted that the council is committed to supporting anyone affected by the eviction process. The spokesperson detailed that in July 2024, two appeals against the enforcement notice had been dismissed, and the inspector’s decision to uphold the notice underscored the council’s reasonable actions.

To address the broader issue of homelessness and squatting in the area, Somerset Council is implementing initiatives such as the Enabling Project, part of the Glastonbury Town Deal, aimed at improving local circumstances. The council has also secured funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to conduct a feasibility study addressing the need for designated sites for temporary and permanent pitches across Somerset, with a view toward implementation in 2025/26.

As the conflict continues between the local authority and property owners like Chris Black, the situation in Glastonbury highlights the intricate dynamics surrounding housing, community rights, and urban management in a changing socio-economic landscape.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://blackmorevale.net/squatters-removed-from-glastonbury-house-which-is-now-boarded-up> - This article corroborates the issue of squatting in Glastonbury, highlighting instances where squatters have been removed from properties, which underscores the broader challenge of managing squatting in the area.
* <https://www.glastonburyandsomertonconservatives.org.uk/news/conservatives-request-public-meeting-pcc-and-mp-discuss-residents-concerns-about-travellers> - This report indicates concerns about travellers in the Glastonbury area, similar to the concerns raised regarding squatting and the larger population of caravans mentioned in the article.
* <https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/your-area/glastonbury-town/priorities/anti-social-behaviour-high-street-glastonbury> - This webpage highlights the presence of anti-social behavior in Glastonbury, which complements the broader narrative of social challenges and complexities faced by local authorities in managing community issues.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - While the exact article on Noah Wire Services was not specified, this outlet is the source of the original information about the challenges in Glastonbury concerning squatting and housing.
* <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/traveller-sites-policy-and-guidance-for-local-authorities> - Although not directly mentioned, this government guidance provides context on how local authorities manage traveller sites, relevant to discussions about designated sites in Somerset.