# Driver tears up Meyrick Park rugby pitch amid traveller encampment sparks community outrage



A recent incident in Bournemouth has reignited concerns over potential vandalism tied to traveller encampments, this time involving a driver who recklessly tore up a community rugby pitch. Captured on video, the driver performed a series of handbrake turns across the turf at Meyrick Park, resulting in thousands of pounds worth of damage. This event followed the establishment of an encampment by a group of travellers who reportedly removed boulders that served as barriers to access the field, setting up camp with several caravans.

Witnesses to the spectacle were left horrified as the actions of the driver came alarmingly close to two young men working out on the pitch. Though locals quickly alerted the police, authorities managed to disperse the travellers within 24 hours using a Section 61 dispersal notice. However, the rugby club, home to Oakmedians Rugby Club, faces a substantial financial burden for repairs, as the damage was extensive and occurred within a remarkably short time frame.

Jo Keeling, a member of the rugby community, expressed her dismay on social media, stating how infuriating and upsetting it is to witness such vandalism. She noted the hard work dedicated by the club’s members, lamenting the disproportionate damage caused in less than 48 hours. This particular incident has drawn comparisons to similar occurrences across the country where traveller groups have reportedly caused significant damage to sporting facilities.

For instance, in Devon, a group of around 20 travellers caused comparable devastation at Topsham Rugby Club, where they broke through gates and vandalised the field, leading to fixtures being cancelled. The situation was serious enough that the club had to engage bailiffs and police to remove the encampment after serving an eviction notice. This pattern of behaviour appears to be part of a broader issue that has affected multiple rugby and sports clubs in recent months.

In Hampshire, New Milton Rugby Club faced its own spate of vandalism, where individuals were seen ripping tiles from the pavilion roof and damaging goalposts. The chairman of the club expressed frustration over the repeated incidents and their impact on club operations. Similarly, Portsmouth Rugby Club reported break-ins resulting in damage to rugby posts, further illustrating the widespread nature of this troubling trend.

Furthermore, another related incident in Caldicot saw a car performing doughnuts on a football pitch, coinciding with the arrival of a traveller encampment, leading to fixture cancellations. Such vandalism not only disrupts scheduled events but also places unwarranted financial strain on community sports organisations that often rely heavily on local support and funding.

Local authorities, including Dorset Police, are investigating these latest acts of vandalism, reflecting a collective call from the community for more robust measures to combat the growing instances of destructive encampments and accompanying chaos. Residents are urging their councils and police to take greater action to protect local sporting facilities, which are vital for community cohesion and youth engagement.

The backlash from these incidents highlights a need for dialogue on how local governments can better accommodate the Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller community while also safeguarding community spaces. Some councils are already exploring solutions, including designated transit sites, but the challenge remains in balancing community needs with the rights of travellers—ensuring that local sports clubs can operate free from fear of vandalism and disruption. With the rising frequency of such events, there is an urgent need for preventive measures that engage both communities and protect valuable recreational spaces.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14744403/Shocking-moment-community-rugby-pitch-torn-driver-performing-handbrake-turns-travellers-pitched-fields.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1442628/Travellers-rugby-pitch-Topsham-Devon-criminal-damage)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14744403/Shocking-moment-community-rugby-pitch-torn-driver-performing-handbrake-turns-travellers-pitched-fields.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.advertiserandtimes.co.uk/news/outrage-over-wrecking-spree-at-new-milton-rugby-club-9153229/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.advertiserandtimes.co.uk/news/vandals-wreck-rugby-clubs-new-goalposts-within-24-hours-9152747/), [[5]](https://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/crime/police-investigation-after-vandals-damage-rugby-pitch-327695)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/car-tears-up-public-playing-24580048)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14744403/Shocking-moment-community-rugby-pitch-torn-driver-performing-handbrake-turns-travellers-pitched-fields.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 6 – [[2]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1442628/Travellers-rugby-pitch-Topsham-Devon-criminal-damage), [[3]](https://www.advertiserandtimes.co.uk/news/outrage-over-wrecking-spree-at-new-milton-rugby-club-9153229/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[5]](https://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/crime/police-investigation-after-vandals-damage-rugby-pitch-327695), [[6]](https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/car-tears-up-public-playing-24580048)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14744403/Shocking-moment-community-rugby-pitch-torn-driver-performing-handbrake-turns-travellers-pitched-fields.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1442628/Travellers-rugby-pitch-Topsham-Devon-criminal-damage> - In Devon, a group of around 20 travellers reportedly broke through a gate to park on Topsham Rugby Club's field, causing extensive damage. The club reported that a gate was broken, a defibrillator was ripped off the wall, signage was destroyed, and the pitch was churned up by handbrake turns. Human waste was also found on the pitch. The travellers were served with an eviction notice but failed to move by the deadline, leading to the involvement of bailiffs and police. The club had to cancel fixtures due to the damage. ([express.co.uk](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1442628/Travellers-rugby-pitch-Topsham-Devon-criminal-damage?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.advertiserandtimes.co.uk/news/outrage-over-wrecking-spree-at-new-milton-rugby-club-9153229/> - New Milton Rugby Club in Hampshire faced significant vandalism when youths were seen on the roof of the pavilion, ripping away roof tiles and damaging goalposts. The club estimated the damage to be around £1,500. The chairman expressed frustration over the wanton damage and the impact on the club's operations. Police were investigating the incident, and the club was considering measures to prevent future vandalism. ([advertiserandtimes.co.uk](https://www.advertiserandtimes.co.uk/news/outrage-over-wrecking-spree-at-new-milton-rugby-club-9153229/?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.advertiserandtimes.co.uk/news/vandals-wreck-rugby-clubs-new-goalposts-within-24-hours-9152747/> - New Milton Rugby Club in Hampshire experienced further vandalism when a pair of new goalposts, installed just 24 hours prior, were found bent and beyond repair. The club had to replace the goalposts and faced embarrassment due to the disruption of scheduled matches. The chairman expressed frustration over the repeated incidents and the impact on the club's activities. ([advertiserandtimes.co.uk](https://www.advertiserandtimes.co.uk/news/vandals-wreck-rugby-clubs-new-goalposts-within-24-hours-9152747/?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/crime/police-investigation-after-vandals-damage-rugby-pitch-327695> - Portsmouth Rugby Club in Hilsea, Hampshire, was broken into overnight, resulting in damage to the rugby posts. Police appealed for witnesses to assist in their investigation into the incident. ([portsmouth.co.uk](https://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/crime/police-investigation-after-vandals-damage-rugby-pitch-327695?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/car-tears-up-public-playing-24580048> - In Caldicot, Monmouthshire, a car was seen performing doughnuts and tearing up the surface of a football pitch at King George V playing fields. The incident coincided with the arrival of a traveller encampment, leading to fixture cancellations. Video footage of the event was shared online, prompting an angry reaction from locals. ([walesonline.co.uk](https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/car-tears-up-public-playing-24580048?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/rugby-own-goal-becomes-most-24777675> - A video of a rugby 'own goal' during a match between Avonmouth Old Boys RFC and Midsomer Norton RFC went viral, amassing over 700,000 views on TikTok. The incident occurred when a Midsomer North full-back's mis-hit chip-and-chase kick was intercepted by an Avonmouth attacker, leading to an unopposed try. The video was labeled 'a rugby tragedy' and became the most-watched rugby TikTok in the past 24 hours. ([walesonline.co.uk](https://www.walesonline.co.uk/sport/rugby/rugby-news/rugby-own-goal-becomes-most-24777675?utm_source=openai))