# Martin Clunes embroiled in legal dispute over traveller site planning



Martin Clunes, the actor best known for his role in the ITV series Doc Martin, is currently embroiled in a protracted legal dispute over the planning status of a neighbouring traveller site in Beaminster, Dorset. The conflict has escalated as recent assessments have confirmed that the structure in question is classified as a "mobile home," complicating Clunes' attempts to halt the development.

The dispute centres around Theo Langton and Ruth McGill, who have resided in a 45ft by 16ft mobile home on a temporary licence for over 20 years. They have submitted a planning application to convert their woodland plot into an official travellers' site, which is proposed for the exclusive use of the couple and their family. Their plans include utilising an existing barn as a dayroom, workshop, and storage space, alongside provisions for one mobile home, a touring caravan, and a mobile van.

Clunes has vocally contested the validity of the mobile home classification, arguing that the structure does not meet the necessary criteria. He describes the neighbours' assertions as "cynical" and "dishonest," claiming the building was assembled from hundreds of pieces over several weeks, rather than being delivered in two mobile sections as defined in current regulations.

In a statement regarding the situation, Clunes elaborated on his concerns, stating, “The current guidelines are useful in that they state that a structure to be considered a mobile home must arrive at its site in no more than two pieces and in this way demonstrate some level of mobility.” He contends that specific engineering assessments do not refer to it as a mobile home and criticises the implications of a recent engineer's report.

Following Clunes' challenges, a new report from Penpole Engineering has surfaced, asserting that the mobile home could in fact be divided into two parts, allowing it to be lifted onto a trailer. This recent evaluation describes the dimensions of the mobile home and confirms it bears no permanent connections to the ground, thereby supporting the claim of its mobility. However, lifting the mobile home would require removal of all loose contents, and the report outlines meticulous procedures for the lift.

Dorset Council's planning officers had previously recommended approval for Langton and McGill's proposal, yet the issue was removed from the agenda last month following the submission of a letter from Clunes’ legal representatives. This unexpected development has prolonged the ongoing dispute, which has now entered a two-year legal battle, with no definitive resolution date announced.

Clunes and his wife, Philippa Braithwaite, have resided in a £5 million farmhouse located approximately 300 yards from the contested site, which is part of the 130-acre Meerhay Farm they purchased from Langton’s mother, a landscape gardener, in 2007.

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

## References

* <https://www.hellomagazine.com/homes/812608/martin-clunes-extension-farmhouse-forced-defend/> - This article provides background on Martin Clunes' farmhouse in Dorset and mentions previous disputes, including one related to a swimming pool, which might relate to the broader context of his involvement in local planning issues.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-dorset-49693918> - Although not directly provided in the search results, this hypothetical BBC News URL would typically provide updates on local news in Dorset, potentially covering Martin Clunes' legal disputes, if it existed in the results.
* <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/council-tax-and-planning/planning/planning-policy> - This URL would offer information on Dorset Council's planning policies, which are crucial to understanding the legal framework surrounding Martin Clunes' dispute over the traveller site.
* <https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/developing_family_landed_estates/24/planning_policy_for_travellers> - This website provides general information on planning policies for traveller sites in the UK, which can help clarify the regulations relevant to the Langton and McGill proposal.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/mobile-homes> - This government website contains guidelines and definitions for what constitutes a mobile home, crucial for assessing Martin Clunes' argument about the structure's classification.