

Business may have to close after arson attack

BLACKMOOR businessman and Greatham parish councillor Jock Trodden is again the victim of an arsonist.

Another of his company vehicles parked outside an employee's house - this time in Hayling Island - was destroyed by fire in the early hours of Tuesday morning.

Mr Trodden is offering a £10,000 reward for what is the ninth in a series of arson attacks.

He told the *Bordon Herald* that the latest attack puts his business at risk and he may be forced to lay off staff.

The most serious of the arson attacks against him

and his company happened just before Christmas.

On December 14 last year, David Cashman and his partner Angie were woken in their Alton home by a loud bang and found the blue Inveco van, owned by Mr Trodden and parked next to the house, on fire. The blaze had spread to the front of the house.

The couple rushed to get the children - six of them aged eight to 18 - out of the building, running through the smoke and fumes, described as "overpowering".

They also managed to rescue the two family dogs.

The family had to borrow clothes and shoes because they only wore their nightwear on one of

the coldest nights of the year.

They were left homeless because the fire damaged much of the front of the house, melting the PVC window frames and destroying Christmas presents and decorations.

Mr Cashman works for Mr Trodden's JTS Civil Engineering firm, based in Blackmoor.

At the time Mr Trodden said: "This was attempted murder."

He gave the family financial help to move back into the house before Christmas.

Among earlier incidents, Mr Trodden was subjected to an arson attack at his home in 2009, when petrol

was poured through his letterbox in Blackmoor.

In 2006 a van had been destroyed by fire.

Last year another van was set alight at the home of an employee in Cowplain.

Last November, a van, again in Cowplain, was attacked by arsonists, and the same night another van burnt out in Liphook.

Mr Trodden told the *Bordon Herald*: "I would be grateful for any help the media can give as this is the ninth arson attack on my property, resulting in about £400,000 worth of damage.

"We may have to close down our business and lay off the 15 full-time staff."

Gypsy caravans refused

A PLAN by a Headley Down landowner to install gypsy caravans on two pitches at Stallions of Substance Lodge, in Grayshott Road, has been refused by East Hampshire District Council.

The application, which also includes the retention of an existing stableblock and a mobile home, was refused at a meeting of the council's planning committee, in Petersfield, last Thursday.

It was felt there was no "genuine" need for two gypsy pitches in the locality and the pro-

posal was contrary to the Local Plan's protection of the countryside.

The application brought 18 letters of objection, including one from Grayshott Parish Council, whose members said if there was a genuine need for these caravans, they should be near a settlement. Also, they said, it would not be appropriate, as a rule, to make provision for gypsy sites in areas of open land and this site was in the Local Gap.

A county-council gypsy-liaison officer told the committee there was a need for these caravans to be sited.

Builder is bailed

BORDON builder Danny Shea, 45, of Royal Drive, appeared at Aldershot Magistrates Court last Thursday to face 10 charges of fraud and money laundering.

He was given conditional bail to appear again on May 2.