

Professor M Snowling  
Principal  
St John's College  
St Giles  
Oxford OX1 3JP

Dear Maggie,

We are disappointed that you have refused several written offers to meet us to explain why you should not let your College develop a large sand and gravel mine right next to our village of almost two thousand residents. You have received a range of letters from a retired GP, mother of a child at the village school and not least from the children themselves at the same school.

We honestly don't know why you are allowing this to happen and can only assume your advisers have not appraised you of all the facts for you to consider. You must be aware of the rapidly rising national concern of avoidable air pollution being the direct cause of circa 40,000 deaths per year as cited in a recent report published by the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Paediatricians. Our village is not only 350 metres from the proposed mine it is directly under the flight path of the prevailing winds. Seven hundred heavy lorries a week entering and leaving the site will belch their toxic fumes into the air for our children to breathe into their immature lungs causing potentially serious damage.

As if that wasn't enough, consider this. Some of these sand and gravel mine workers are diagnosed on a regular basis with Silicosis which eventually suffocates them and some of those die from it. It is a double tragedy. There is no cure and yet it is preventable. Now the workers wear masks because of the seriousness of the risk. Our infants, children and elderly do not have any protection. As you probably know it is the fine and invisible particles of diesel and silica fumes that lodge deeply and permanently in our lungs and travel up to at least a mile in the air before dispersing to safer levels.

Up until now you and your colleagues have hidden behind the defence of no cases of Silicosis being reported in the general population. Sooner or later there will be. It is a ticking time bomb. Think of the decades long denial of the risk of asbestos and cigarette smoking before government recognised they were the cause of killer diseases never mind the huge and successful litigation that emerged as a consequence to the ill-advised tax payer.

You are in a privileged position of influence. Please, for the sake of our village use it wisely.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely