

Sand and Gravel update 28th October 2023

We have now commissioned most of our expert reports. Some of them have required negotiations with the experts themselves to add to or modify the work to take account of new information that has come to light.

For example the Transport Assessment report we thought would have been completed and posted for you all to see on the BRA website at least a month ago has been delayed because of the recent knowledge of outline planning consent being given by Stratford District Council to produce a large development on Wellesbourne Airfield. This will border the large development planned by Warwick University on the Wellesbourne Campus land north of their existing site. As a result we foresee a significant increase in traffic on the A429 exacerbated by the proposed 216 quarry HGV's moving on and off the A429 via traffic lights near Forge Cottage.

In another case we have deliberately delayed commissioning our expert to conduct an Ecological Assessment. That is because the Warwickshire County Ecologist has compiled such a detailed report highlighting many deficiencies in Smiths Planning Application that we have decided to see how Smiths mitigate those deficiencies before we instruct our own Ecologist. To date, like many other instances, Smiths have not so far responded to several statutory consultees. It is only when they do that these new responses by Smiths go out to the 2400 objectors within the community as well as the statutory consultees for them to respond within a three week consultation period. In other instances there are still some statutory consultees that have not submitted their reports, for example the Highways Agency and the Historic/Conservation Agency. Again we need to see these before we are in a position to comment/challenge them.

Our commissioned Air Quality scientists have now nearly finished collecting their air monitoring data using some of the latest and unique equipment. They have collected data from within Barford School and nearby in Church street as well as other sites of interest to us in the region. This data will then be analysed by a wider group of scientists specialising in this field before submitting their report to us. We believe this work will be breaking new ground as we are not aware it has been done before.

Because WCC minerals planning officers have no facility for the public to view these documents online we have to make appointments with the senior planning officer to visit Shire Hall every two or three weeks to physically inspect and photograph such documents so we don't miss anything. At the last meeting with the senior planner we were advised that, due to shortage of staff and delays mentioned above it is highly likely the Regulatory Committee will not adjudicate on this application now until early in the New Year. If any of the community wish to inspect the documents, then please email "planningconsultation@warwickshire.gov.U.K" to arrange an appointment to view at Shire Hall.

While your committee are now not so busy identifying, recruiting and commissioning experts to provide us with reports to submit, most of our time is taken up with researching new information which may assist with our case. Some of this is fuelled by sending out many requests for information from statutory bodies and commercial organisations with an interest in this quarry under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI). Although we often hit a brick wall sometimes it pays off and we garner nuggets of detail that are proving very useful.

Through recently published academic archaeological history work, we are accumulating some knowledge that we believe could place Wasperton at the centre of English cultural civilisation. The recently published book entitled 'Wasperton' sets out the fact that this was an important centre of a continuous community dating from the Neolithic Enclosure time more than 5500/6000 years ago through the Bronze Age, Roman and then

Anglo- Saxon period to present day. Evidence for this has arisen from the discovery of an almost complete ancient cemetery forty years ago at a large archaeological excavation on the south side of Wasperton village and adjacent to Wasperton Farm on the other side of the A429. This section of the Avon valley has been named by eminent archaeologists as the 'Anglo Saxon corridor'. We are trying to contact some of these academics and compile a report which might stimulate local, regional and maybe even national archaeological organisations to object to this proposed quarry.

Simultaneously we are trying to persuade local farming organisations that this loss of fertile land producing three salad crops a year is against national policy at a time when national food security is broken - we barely produce 50% of our own food.

Some of you may know we are producing a short film to showcase our concerns about the impact this quarry will have which will be targeted at WCC Councillors, media and press. This is nearly complete and again will be published on the BRA website in due course.

Finally, we are in the process of organising a press release to be released before the end of October to reveal the recently acquired unredacted copy of the major previously unknown facts of the Option/Lease agreement between Smiths Concrete and St.John's College, Oxford. First, the 25% financial alignment on tonnage produced not only of excavated sand and gravel but the tonnage of inert backfill. Second, their agreement to then apply for permission to continue to use the site as an industrial complex to recycle aggregate. Smiths are actually doing this at Bubbenhall, north of Leamington Spa. So far they have been there 44 years which presumably they hope to repeat at Wasperton Farm.

If you are inspired to do so by reading the above it is still not too late to object or, if you have already done, to send in a supplementary objection if you feel you didn't cover all the points you wanted in your first response. You can object online by going to the WCC minerals portal and type in WDC/22CM008 or write in quoting this planning application number to WDC/22CM008, Warwickshire County Council, Shire Hall post room, Rear of Shire Hall, Northgate Street, Warwick CV34 4RL.

Malcolm Eykyn