

Representative parties and the 110 people in attendance in the overspill room, thank you for attending today to hear the concerns of the local residents. Alongside many others, I feel the need to make a few points regarding the proposed sand & gravel quarry at Lea Castle.

There are numerous people here who wish to make a passionate plea to you about opposing the quarry, and I worry that you will feel that our pleas are unfounded and even verging on Nimby.

I hope to dispel this idea.

My partner and I have lived in Cookley for more than 20 years. You will have, no doubt, visited the areas around the proposed site and will see on Monday that although surrounded by beautiful green belt, we are not a picture postcard Cotswold village, but a working community with Steel Wheels very much an important part of it's make-up. We have some factory noise when the wind blows in certain directions and we have some large vehicles moving through the village on a regular basis and so through its existence we have an understanding of noise and traffic. Highlighting this point is to show we are not a village of high tea and croquet that wants its rural idyll preserved, we are community that embraces a company that offers significant employment to locals and is generally involved in the village dynamic without being to its detriment – something a quarry can't provide.

I am not naïve, I received my Doctorate in geology and been involved in geo fieldwork for more than 10 years - because of my experience understand the need for raw materials, but maintain that the identification of extraction sites should be sympathetic to the surrounding area. The Lea Castle Site will allow sand and gravel to be quarried from the Wildmoor Sandstone Formation and is widespread across England. This has, traditionally, been quarried for it's high silicate content. By its very nature, quarrying the formation will release silicates into the atmosphere (directly linked to respiratory conditions/diseases) and if the quarry site is approved, will be releasing this material into a concentrated area of vulnerable people, as well as potentially affecting the health of those who are not currently classed as 'vulnerable'. At a previous meeting it was stated that whilst on site workers wear PPE to prevent the condition through concentrated exposure, Silicosis has not been recorded in the general populus and so is not considered to be a significant risk. However, if this is not being looked for or has exacerbated pre-existing conditions in the vulnerable it won't be recorded. The operators have changed their information several times

regarding whether or not silicates will be quarried and in the last meeting acknowledged silicate quarrying and advised that they will be employing fine mist practices during working hours to keep dust particles down. Do the dust particles just disappear when outside working hours and are NRS really going to pretend that the surrounding area will not be contaminated by airborne particles and via road transportation?

Anyone local to the area will be familiar with Wildmoor Quarry on Sandy Lane which, as the name suggests, is removing the same sand and gravel as the proposed Lea Castle Site.

Wildmoor Quarry has been operating since the 1930's and planning permissions have been granted for mineral extraction at the site in 1952, 1971, 1993 and for an extension in 1999. A further application was granted in 2021 for restoration of the Chadwich Lane Quarry, located about 900 metres north of the quarry site and this will be transported to the Wildmoor Site.

Rightly or wrongly and please don't take offence but it has been suggested in reporting that Worcestershire County Council overlooked all objections regarding pollution, transportation issues and problems with the water table because they said they need sand. We felt WCC heard our plea on the Lea Castle Site and fear for its reversal. *We don't want to be in the same situation, to become a casualty to quotas.*

Whilst this is not NRS, the Wildmoor Quarry will be adhering to the same governance regarding operations to mitigate pollution, using water dampening/wheel washing etc and so I have pictures of this working example, showing the spread of sand along the access road - with significant deposits visible for at least half a mile in either direction. The images were taken after rain, but on dry days the sand actually whips up into clouds along the road, disturbed by general traffic and carries even further. Even after heavy rain the vegetation and road signs are coated in a sandy residue. Ignoring the regular movement of trucks, the contamination alone is hardly minimal impact on its surroundings.

The proposed quarry site at Lea Castle is directly opposite a school, another 2 schools located in Wolverley are within a few minutes walking distance of the site entrance, and there is a primary school in Cookley. There is a large nursing home within 5-minutes walk of the proposed quarry entrance, another in Cookley, as well as a large residential complex for elderly people. Whilst water-

based solutions have been proposed, again, by looking at Wildmoor quarry it can be easily demonstrated from the debris coating the vegetation, etc that this is not 100% effective and pollution at such a level in a populated area such as ours is not only unacceptable but completely irresponsible. In addition to health matters, particulate pollution will reduce the quality of life for residents, by reducing the cleanliness of the environment in which we live, from roads to windows and even to the washing on our lines. With re-assignment of greenbelt allowing the addition of at least another 800 houses to the 600 house development on the Lea Castle Village site on the opposite side of the A449 there will be an even higher residential use of land surrounding the quarry, with all of the extra traffic that brings, further strengthening the case for this being a unsuitable quarry site.

Going back to site dampening or post quarry infill, given the inconsistencies in the porosity and make up of the Wildmoor Sandstone, without borehole data generated from the site to the Wet Woodland SSI at Hurcott less than 2 miles to the southeast (which in itself couldn't detect local inconsistencies in the formations) there is no way of knowing whether there will be the potential for groundwater pollution either during the life of the quarry or after infill to irreversibly damage the site.

In the official representations to and by the council, the existence of the quarry was referred to as a 'temporary' measure. *This is not a set of roadworks that will be in place for a few days or weeks and cause minimal disruption*; the original licence period itself with all that it brings would exceed the formative years of at least 1 generation of children from the local villages and certainly be in place for the sunset years of many of the nursing home residents. Whilst we have no proof that longevity would be extended, if we take the Wildmoor Quarry as test case; that quarry has been running for longer than I have been alive and as you can see, I am no spring chicken. If this is applied to the NRS application if the site is approved, the quarry could be part of the area for a lifetime. Neither the original proposal or a potential extension could ever be considered a temporary measure.

I don't have time to address my concerns over everything I would like to such as local road use, lack of economic support (the few jobs created will be specialist), habitat removal, the lack of guarantees that truly inert material will be used as infill and the presumption that private land will be re-instated as parkland and available for public use.

With the Labour councillor Mr Matt Western in January 2022 having proposed to the house, a motion regarding the siting of quarries in populated areas - a presumption in planning decision-making against approving such developments in an attempt to protect communities from potentially harmful emissions produced by mining activities, everyday folks are finally being represented.

*However, Mr Normington, for an area that seems to be under pressure from all sides, securing our greenbelt and the future of our villages, be they old or new, is in your hands - and whilst you will be presented with many facts and figures assessing the viability of the quarry site on paper, we are the villages at ground zero, the people who will be directly affected and the voices that need to be heard.*

Thank you.



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STONEYBRIDGE











