

I write in objection to the proposed quarry at Lea Castle Farm near Wolverley.

My name is Jill Aston and I am a horse owner, rider, instructor and trainer with more than 25 years experience in the equine world. I am also the last person to have run a riding school at Lea Castle Equestrian Centre owned by Mr and Mrs McDonald.

My own personal horses are currently kept on livery at Lea Castle Equestrian Centre.

The peace and tranquility of the area provides home to my three horses - an ex international show jumper, a competition horse and a children's pony.

The equestrian centre has been exactly that since its inset and has provided thousands of children and adults with the pleasure of equestrianism.

My own daughter is only 11 months old and because of the nature of the centre and surrounding bridle paths, I am able to take her out on her pony for hacks knowing that we have a large visual area to prepare for any potential hazards but also to enjoy the bird song, the weather and the safety of these paths. My 7 year old niece has learned to ride at the centre on our pony and can often be found riding solo up and down the bridle paths with us adults tagging along at a distance knowing she is always within our view and watching her embrace the outdoors on her best friend and noble steed.

I beg you to consider the young and less experienced equestrians using these bridle paths and the potential impact that the changes in the area would have upon them should the quarry go ahead. They will no longer be able to enjoy these paths safely for fear of rolling conveyor belts beneath their pony's feet, HGVs that could upset their beloved friend and not to mention the dark dusty tunnels the bridle paths will become with the new bund structures in place.

The indoor school at Lea Castle Equestrian Centre enables both novice riders and horses the ability to begin their ridden career in a quiet and safe environment where they can take time to adjust and learn their new skills - this will no longer be a quiet safe space with a quarry rumbling less than 100m away.

I, myself, have broken and trained young horses for many years. I have produced and sold more horses than I can count and I can safely say that less than a handful of these would I ever consider riding over a road with a conveyor underneath it, regardless of how much rubber is buffering it. The idea that riders should dismount and lead their horses across can only have been thought of by a total non rider as this is almost the cardinal sin of the equine world - you will never have more control of a 600kg horse by standing next to it than you do astride it.

Many years ago when Lea Castle Farm was leased to a Mr Paul Grainger for the training of racehorses, we were able to ride in the field that borders the A449 and A442 where the proposed new bridle path is to be placed and having ridden possibly close to 50 different horses in that field, I can guarantee that I wouldn't be riding any of them against the road and I certainly would not be taking children's ponies in there. The road

is fast, the traffic always in a rush, the traffic lights and queuing cars create additional business and it has always caused the horses to spook at ease.

I don't know where I would move my horses to should the quarry go ahead. I don't think I would find anywhere that offers the safety or beauty of the bridle paths and fields that currently surround them, immediately on their doorstep with no roads needed to access them. I do know that they won't be able to live with the air, noise and light pollution that the quarry will bring and I wouldn't expect them to, the damage to their health could be immeasurable.

Regards,

Jill Aston