



Letter from Barrowden Parish Council to Residents. Issues with Noise from Wakerley Quarry

The Parish Council is acutely aware of residents' concerns regarding the noise and dust emanating from Wakerley Quarry and the planning application to extend the operating hours which was submitted by Mick George Ltd (MGL) to Northamptonshire County Council Minerals Planning Department (NCC) last summer.

Cllrs Gordon Brown and Mike Ferrow represent the Parish Council on the Wakerley Quarry Liaison Group. They attend all its meetings and have made several visits to the Quarry site, reporting back to the Council on noise and dust issues at the Quarry but also acknowledging the limited concessions made by MGL to community concerns. Gordon and Mike are well qualified to represent the village on the Liaison Group, as they are both professional engineers with extensive experience in matters relating to noise and vibrations.

The Parish Council has discussed issues about the Quarry at almost every one of its monthly meetings over the last two to three years and has been persistent in lobbying both NGL and RCC over the proposed planning application. It has been in frequent dialogue with the Planning Director at MGL, who attended the Council meeting in July 2020 and was vigorously questioned by councillors about operations at the Quarry. Following this meeting a letter was sent by the Council to NCC (copied to village email at the time and sent as a separate attachment with the present letter). Due in part to the detailed evidence presented by the Council, NCC has been reluctant to determine the application for extended hours and has encouraged MGL to carry out further noise monitoring to identify baseline and current noise levels. This information has recently been provided and is currently being assessed.

The latest position is that MGL has withdrawn its application for extended operational hours and is seeking permission to allow vehicles to be loaded with quarry material during Monday to Thursday afternoons before 6 pm, park on site overnight and then leave the Quarry between 6 and 7 am. Quarry operating hours would remain the same as at present: between 7 am and 6 pm five days per week plus Saturday mornings. The Quarry Liaison Group have agreed to a pilot of the proposed arrangements during March with sound levels being measured both in the Quarry and in Barrowden. During future measurements at Barrowden, at the request of Gordon and Mike, the MGL independent sound engineer will be accompanied by the RCC Environment Officer, who has experience of sound monitoring on other quarry sites.

We understand that the more important matter to residents is the issue of noise during the working day, and recent evidence provided by MGL suggests that measurements are borderline on the noise emanating from the site at the existing measurement locations. As a result of pressure applied by the Parish Council, Barrowden will in future be added to these



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locations. In a number of cases the measured noise exceeded the one hour average of 45dB(leq 1hr). This will be the subject of discussion at the next Liaison Group meeting.

MGL have been working in the last year to reduce noise from the site including

- 1 Tarmacking the haul road from Duddington all the way to the Quarry entrance at the top of the site. This smooth road has reduced the body slap caused by empty lorries travelling up to the Quarry, which had been a major issue early last summer.
- 2 The main processing equipment has been modified to reduce the potential to create or amplify sound.
- 3 Drivers of the loader responsible for feeding the crusher have been directed by MGL to ensure that rock is maintained within the hopper and also to minimise rock falling directly on to the metal of the hopper. Where this is not possible, the rock is to be gently slipped into the hopper.
- 4 MGL have committed to completing a 12m high bund along the north face of the Quarry facing Barrowden. Work on this has been delayed because of the wet weather, which has limited the ability of the earth- moving equipment to move material and extend the height of the bunds. They are currently about 75% complete.

Recently the Parish Council suggested that MGL may wish to consider the type of technology which they are using in the Quarry for processing the stone, as it appears to those of us not involved in quarrying that the equipment comes from the 1950s. In response MGL stated that in the 1950s the men used picks and shovels (which residents would probably prefer!). One of the suggestions made to MGL is that they may wish to consider working with a couple of appropriate UK universities in a joint research project to improve the equipment and processes in order to reduce the source and level of noise. The University of Derby is the principal UK University with a dedicated mineral extraction department, and if it were linked with one of the leading UK universities dealing with noise and vibration, such as Imperial College London or the University of Glasgow, then they might be able to find a solution to the noise levels while maintaining quarry throughput.

Unfortunately, MGL has approval under the existing planning conditions to operate the Quarry with noise levels up to 45dB (leq 1hr) or even higher when removing overburden. The Parish Council has been pressing MGL to monitor the noise level continuously rather than what is required in the planning condition conditions, namely just one hour once per year at a time of MGL's choosing. By continually monitoring the noise levels and providing the data real-time to a dedicated website, MGL would be able to demonstrate to residents that they were actually achieving noise levels below the required planning condition. The Council is continuing to campaign for this change.



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The Parish Council will continue to report residents' concerns forcibly in the discussions with MGL and the local authorities in order to achieve noise levels within Barrowden similar to those experienced from the A47. The Parish Council will also be considering whether itself to commission noise monitoring within Barrowden, in order to provide evidence in the event that an application is forthcoming from MGL for extended hours, whatever the nature of those hours may be.

It is important, when residents note that noise levels from the Quarry are apparently at an excessive level, that they should record that noise and send the recording with their comments to

- 1 Quarry Manager at MGL <mailto:darren.griffiths@mickgeorge.co.uk>
- 2 NCC minerals department <mailto:gpwatson@northamptonshire.gov.uk>
- 3 East Northants District Council Environmental Health department
<mailto:Mandy.Dennis@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk>
- 4 Rutland County Council Environmental Health department
<mailto:SSprason@rutland.gov.uk>

with copies of these emails the Clerk at the Parish Council
<mailto:clerk@barrowdenpc.org.uk>

Comprehensive Information regarding previous discussions and decisions by the Parish Council with reference to Wakerley Quarry can be found in the Parish Council Minutes (on the Council website and as paper copies in a folder in the Shop) and in numerous supporting documents. Many such documents are posted as supporting papers for Council meetings in the 'Council Calendar' section of the Council website. A search in the 'Document Store' section will bring up dozens of relevant documents with which the Council has engaged over the years. Please go to <https://www.barrowdenpc.org.uk/>.

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