

**NOTES FROM A MEETING OF THE WOLDINGHAM ACTION GROUP (WAG) HELD ON
SATURDAY 15th DECEMBER AT THE WOLDINGHAM VILLAGE HALL - NOTES No. WAG01**

1. Introduction

- 1.a The meeting chairman, George Burne, welcomed the 200+ attendees to the meeting. He explained that the format of the meeting would be 4 brief presentations from Keith Newell (Chair of the Woldingham Association), Bobby Johnson (Vicechair of the Woldingham Parish Council), Sally Marks (Surrey County Councillor and Woldingham Parish Councillor) and Richard Butcher (Tandridge District Councillor) and that these presentations would be followed by an opportunity to raise questions.
- 1.b George then introduced those sitting on the head table – Colin Packington (Woldingham Parish Councillor) and Geoffrey King (Woldingham Association Councillor) both of whom will be on the WAG Fighting Fund Committee, Keith Newell and Bobby Johnson.

2. Keith Newell (Chair of the Woldingham Association)

- 2.a Keith explained some background regarding the Chalk Pit Quarry and what has led up to this meeting.
- 2.b In 1992 the quarry was given permission by the Environment Agency to extract 15k tonnes of chalk pa and to re-instate the quarry with inert waste, until 2042. In 2006, the infilling was more precisely defined as up to 100k tonnes pa.
- 2.c The above figures imply an average of about 23 lorries per day. However on some days over 150 lorry movements have been recorded.
- 2.d Earlier this year RailTrack closed a nearby bridge which re-routed the lorries through a residential area of Oxted.
- 2.e A proposal currently under discussion is for a “haul” road to be constructed in the quarry such that lorries can exit the quarry onto the Ridge in the direction of the Limpsfield Road.
- 2.f It is understood that the quarry operator has recently acquired the property and associated field at the top of Chalk Pit Lane – perhaps for lorry cleaning/parking purposes?
- 2.g Should lorries exit onto the Ridge then that road will need to be widened.
- 2.h It should be noted that the area is in the Green Belt, is part of an area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB), and the quarry includes a conservation area and a site of special scientific interest (SSSI).
- 2.i The operator has actually started construction work on the proposed haul road but has been stopped from undertaking this activity because he does not have planning permission.
- 2.j A formal Planning Application is expected early in the new year.
- 2.k Several concerns have been raised regarding the potential impact on the residents of Woldingham and neighbouring villages and upon the environment in general.
- 2.l It is currently unclear which route lorries exiting onto the Ridge would be instructed to take (and actually take). Potentially such movement could come through the centre of Woldingham, the outskirts of Woldingham (via Slines Oak Road and Halliloo Valley Road), or through Limpsfield (via Titsey Hill) or Westerham - all of which are currently unsuitable for lorries. The other option, which is through the centre of Warlingham, is equally undesirable.
- 2.m Keith then explained that a Fighting Fund is being set up and requested that everyone pledge say £50 to the fund. The monies will be used, if necessary, to ensure that Woldingham is impacted as little as possible by whatever proposals are put forward. All monies will be formally accounted for and any unused monies will be refunded on a pro rata basis when the fund is closed down.
- 2.n The fund committee has already arranged a meeting with a consultant experienced in such matters.

3. Bobby Johnson (Vice-chair of the Woldingham Parish Council)

- 3.a Bobby suggested that residents may wish to view the Surrey website which gives further information. For example, Nick Skellet (Leader of SCC) states that the SCC welcomes this initiative and the operator will be encouraged to create a haul road so that lorries can access the B269 (Limpsfield Road) via the Ridge.
- 3.b Bobby reported that there was a committee meeting held at Oxted yesterday attended by Bill Williams (Woldingham Parish Councillor). Bill has recorded that the TDC Councillor Martin Fisher stated that he thought the suggestion was an excellent idea which would not only please his electors “but the lorries would save 2 miles on their journey”.

4. Sally Marks (Surrey County Councillor and Woldingham Parish Councillor)

- 4.a Sally emphasised that she represents Woldingham and will ensure that our voice is heard. She added, however, that we should all have some sympathy with the residents in Chalk Pit Lane.
- 4.b If the haul road is approved then the most important issue is to prevent lorries from coming through the village - perhaps by designing the junction such that lorries can only exit along the Ridge towards the Limpsfield Road, or by introducing width restrictions into Woldingham whilst still providing access for the emergency services.

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- 4.c Sally added that she understood there is already room for lorry cleaning on the quarry site and speculated that an application for a haul road would be unlikely for at least 2 months due to the amount of work required to submit such an application.
- 5. Richard Butcher (Tandridge District Councillor)**
- 5.a Richard stated that TDC would only be consultees in the process as indeed they were with the original 1992 application and 2006 revision.
- 5.b Richard pointed out that the Environment Agency has granted permission for the extraction of 15k tonnes and dumping of 100k tonnes and in doing so they determined that the current roads were adequate. He questioned what has changed to justify the proposed road scheme?
- 5.c He speculated that the operators would only be willing to spend what he thought must be millions of pounds on a road scheme if they thought that they would then get permission to significantly increase the level of dumping.
- 6. Questions**
- 6.a A number of questions were raised by the attendees including:
- 6.b Q: Can the operator be requested to explore all other options, including (i) slip roads to/from the M25, and (ii) purchasing land to construct a new route around residential Oxted to the A25?
- 6.c Sally responded by saying that the Highways Agency have said that they would not consider the M25 option even though it is only about 200 yards away from the quarry.
- 6.d Q: Why should SCC even consider a haul road when the shortest route by far to the M25 is via Oxted?
- 6.e Q: Could Bobby explain the statement that lorries would save 2 miles on their journey and therefore identify which village(s) would be most impacted by the plan?
- 6.f Bobby responded by saying that she was reporting what she had been told and did not know the answer to the question.
- 6.g Q: Could traffic calming measures be introduced which would discourage lorries from coming through the village?
- 6.h Q: Surely Mr Skellet would support the proposition to create slip roads to/from the M25 as it would reduce the inconvenience to the majority of Oxted residents and cause no inconvenience to other villages?
- 6.i Some discussion took place around the original presumption that approximately 30 lorry movements per day were the basis of the permission granted and what should happen if this number is exceeded – which it clearly has been on many occasions. It was thought that the governing factor is the limit of 100k tonnes pa and that once that limit has been reached then lorry movements should cease until the following year.
- 6.j Q: Can the above restrictions on lorry movements be clarified?
- 6.k Q: Is it possible that the quarry operators will also seek permission to fill in from the top of the quarry as the quarry gets filled up – i.e. dumping from the Ridge – as a future option?
- 6.l Q: Is our MP, Peter Ainsworth (who is shadow Environment Minister), aware of what is going on?
- 6.m Sally responded by saying she had attempted to get him to chair the meeting but he was otherwise engaged.
- 6.n Sally then added to the debate by saying we must ensure that if a haul road is approved it is only used as an exit from the quarry - or else we could have lorry movements in all directions. She also reported that another option which has been suggested is to make Chalk Pit Lane one-way so that lorries can use it to reach the Ridge - and at the same time remove the need for a haul road.
- 6.o Q: Can we ensure we keep all the local villages aware of what is happening and get them involved in whatever actions we consider appropriate?
- 6.p The WAG will keep residents informed via the Woldingham website, the WA and PC Noticeboards (located in the Crescent) and via email if residents supply their email addresses on the WAG Fighting Fund pledge form. When and if appropriate, details will be provided on how one can object to any specific Planning Application.
7. The meeting closed at 12:03pm.