

001/06

## Novington Sandpit Residents' Committee

### Minutes of Meeting Held on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2006 7.30pm, Plumpton Village Hall – Committee Room

**Present:** Mr & Mrs M Barnard; John Bonnett; Barbara Cheal; Laurie Collins; Charles Dampney; Tim Davies; Jane George; Veronica Harris; Nigel Hills; David Holmes; Graham Inglis; Rod MacLaren; John and Jeanie Muddle; Paul & Carole Nicholson; Julie Russell; Christine Thompson; Dominic Williams; Katie Wride

**Others who had expressed interest in helping/unable to attend meeting:** Mr & Mrs Robin Akers; Gordon Barr; Ron Carson; Kevin Cohen; Jean Eagle; Mr & Mrs Stephen Galletly; Jane Gane; Carol Hendry; Sally Huband; Tony Hutson; Mr & Mrs Clive Mountford; Richard Muirhead; John Sheeran; Gary & Lindsey Smith; Sue Smyth; David Tetley; Teresa Wells

(All of the above listed residents will receive a copy of these minutes)

#### 1. Opening Remarks

Following a meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> June with the Novington Sandpit Operator, Mr Steve Dudman, his advisor Mr Donald Symes and his site manager Mr Ron Gibson, residents had asked Paul Nicholson to organise this meeting. Paul Nicholson had circulated an explanatory note to all the residents of Plumpton and Plumpton Green, and John Bonnett and Charles Dampney had circulated the same to residents in East Chiltington.

Paul Nicholson took the Chair for the early stages of the meeting.

Paul made the following opening remarks:

- 35 or more households had been in touch with Paul expressing a willingness to help in a variety of ways. This showed a real concern in the community and he thanked everyone for their support. This was across Plumpton, Plumpton Green and East Chiltington, and Paul felt that it was important for the respective parishes to work well together.
- He explained that the Brighton & Hove Waste & Minerals Plan 1999 identified Novington Sandpit as a preferred site and as such any sensibly constructed planning application would have been seen favourably by the County Council, and hence consent was granted by East Sussex County Council on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2003.
- From his knowledge of planning rules, Paul thought that ESCC had dealt with the planning issues correctly, and that there were unlikely to be any grounds for appeal. However, he was trying to organise a meeting with ESCC to clarify some issues and would report back in due course.
- Clarification was required into who actually owns the site. Mr Dudman had indicated that he owned the site. However, the land registry still records Sir John Blaker as the freehold owner. It is possible that an operating lease has been granted to Mr Dudman.
- At the meeting with the Operator, residents heard that the owner of Novington Manor, Mr Ivor Dickinson, holds a restrictive covenant over the site. Clearly this is

a private issue between Mr Dickinson and Mr Dudman, but it appeared that both sides felt that they had a strong case, and Mr Dickinson was seeking the advice of legal Counsel.

- Paul recognised that residents are concerned about the fact that the previous operator (who may or may not be associated with the current Operator) did not carry out the final restoration of the site in accordance with his planning consent. He suggested that perhaps it was time to try and forget the past activities and to work together to look forward and ensure that the current Operator abides by the 26 planning conditions imposed upon him in the planning consent, including the ongoing and final restoration of the site.
- Paul also noted that each individual resident has their own view as to what are the important issues regarding the site: traffic, noise, pollution, wildlife, amenity value – but he stressed that it is now vitally important that the Committee moves forward on behalf of all residents speaking with one voice so that there is no room for the operator to ‘divide and rule’. Paul explained that from his own working experience, operators have a ‘love-hate’ relationship with Liaison Groups – in their eyes they are a pain to deal with because they present an organised face of the community, but they are easier to relate to and respond to. A co-ordinated approach gets better results (as advised by major operators such as Hanson, Lafarge and Tarmac).
- Paul saw all the members of the Residents’ Committee (ie all those listed as present or willing to help as above) as needing to be involved in acting as ‘policemen’, feeding their observations into an elected sub-committee (known as the Liaison Group) that will represent them in meetings with the Operator and ESCC.

## 2. The Novington Sandpit Liaison Group

Paul Nicholson explained that modern day practice was that an operator moving into a community should form a liaison group with elected members of the community.

The Operator had suggested that the Novington Sandpit Liaison Group should include residents from Plumpton Lane, Novington Lane, Plumpton Green, the Parish Councils of Plumpton and East Chiltoningon, ESCC and other specialists as required.

The meeting agreed with this proposal, and accordingly the meeting elected the following residents to sit on the Novington Sandpit Liaison Group with the Operator:

<b>Paul Nicholson</b>	Plumpton Lane South end	
<b>Rod MacLaren</b>	Plumpton Lane South end	
<b>Nigel Hills</b>	Plumpton Lane South end;	alternate: Laurie Collins
<b>Graham Inglis</b>	East Chiltoningon;	alternate: Veronica Harris
<b>Katie Wride</b>	Plumpton Green	alternates: David Holmes & Julie Russell
<b>Christine Thompson</b>	Plumpton Parish Cl rep	alternate: to be advised
<b>Charles Dampney</b>	East Chiltoningon Parish C rep	alternate: Nigel Welby
<b>Tony Hutson</b>	Wildlife	

In due course, each of the above representatives would be asked to be lead spokesmen for particular issues such as noise, traffic, dust, pollution, wildlife, planning, restoration.

Residents would be advised so that they know who to contact to raise awareness of particular concerns.

### **3. Novington Sandpit Residents' Committee (NSRC)**

Paul explained that the objectives of the committee (made up of all the attendees and others listed at the start of these minutes) would be to:

- Monitor the operation of the Sandpit.
- Compare and report on the operation of the Sandpit against the planning conditions set out in the planning consent.
- Receive and collate incident reports relating to the operation of the Sandpit.
- Liaise with the relevant Parish Councils.
- Liaise with ESCC.
- Attend and participate in all meetings of the Novington Sandpit Liaison Group (represented by those residents elected in item 2 above)
- Report regularly on those meetings and generally on the operation of the Sandpit to all residents

Paul circulated a draft constitution for the NSRC which proposed:

- A Chairman and Deputy Chairman shall be appointed by the members of the NSRC and shall serve for two years. They may offer themselves for re-election at the end of that term.
- The Chairman and/or the Deputy Chairman may be removed from office at any time if three NSRC members so vote.
- Meetings of the NSRC shall be held at least four times per annum.
- A quorum shall exist when at least six members attend.
- Minutes shall be produced.
- The NRSC shall cease when the operation of the Sandpit and the ultimate restoration of the Sandpit are completed.

The meeting reviewed the draft constitution and approved the content. Accordingly the meeting voted Paul Nicholson to be Chairman, and Rod MacLaren to be Deputy Chairman.

### **4. Review of Planning Consent**

Paul circulated copies of the planning consent. He summarised the consent as follows:

- Excavation would be for a period up to ten years.
- The proposed area of excavation was the land to the East of the existing sandpit. He noted that ESCC had stipulated that excavation to the East of the bridleway through Novington Estate would not be acceptable.
- It was not intended to use the site for future landfill.
- There was an annual limit on extraction of 40,000 tonnes, and importation of 10,000 tonnes.
- Truck traffic was to be restricted to Plumpton Lane only along the South end.
- There was to be early restoration around the existing quarry, ongoing minor restoration as the excavation progressed, and full restoration at the end of the work, with a five year after-care condition imposed on the Operator.

Paul suggested that residents review the planning consent documentation at their leisure and let him or members of the elected Liaison Group have any comments or questions.

**Action: All**

## **5. Review of the Planning Conditions**

Paul and Carole had prepared a schedule of the 26 planning conditions that had been placed on the Operator by ESCC, together with some initial thoughts as to how the Residents' Committee might monitor the Operator's performance against these conditions. Paul noted, in particular, that there were nine pre-conditions imposed on the Operator that must be met before extraction can commence. He hoped that the newly established Liaison Group would be able to work with the Operator and ESCC to ensure that these conditions were met to the satisfaction of the Residents' Committee.

Some discussion took place as to the exact role of the Residents' Committee. It was agreed that there were three objectives, as follows:

- To establish whether there are grounds to prevent the Operator from working on the site.** This was thought to be an unlikely outcome.
- To monitor the Operator's performance against the 26 planning conditions imposed on him by ESCC.** It was agreed that this is the primary role of the Liaison Group, with the help of the whole Residents' Committee. This work would include monitoring of the nine pre-conditions, as well as ongoing traffic, noise, pollution, restoration, and wildlife issues.
- To ensure that the Operator restores the site at the end of the excavation period and also maintains the site for five years after the end of the excavation period.** This would be the role of the Liaison Group, with the help of the Residents' Committee.

There was some discussion about wildlife on the site. The meeting noted that protected species such as badgers, lesser ringed plovers, great crested newts are known to be on site. These species, in particular, required various licences to be obtained by the Operator before any work could commence on the site. It was thought that the site manager had left the site pending such approvals. The Liaison Group members would take up these issues with the Operator and ESCC.

**Action: Liaison Group**

Various ideas had been given to Paul regarding traffic calming (such as speed restrictions, bollards to prevent vehicles arriving at the site from the North and exiting to

the North, mirrors at the Half Moon junction, etc). These possible measures would be taken up by the Liaison Group with the Operator and ESCC.

**Action: Liaison Group**

It was agreed that photographic evidence should be recorded now to demonstrate the current state of the verges along Plumpton Lane and the B2116. It would then be possible to demonstrate to the Operator if any damage had been incurred by the Operator's heavy trucks. Katie Wride undertook to take these pictures.

**Action: Katie Wride**

There was some discussion as to whether it would be necessary to obtain funding for the work of the Residents' Committee. Minor costs such as hire of meeting rooms would be met by the Parish Council. It was too early to see whether a 'fighting fund' might be required, but the liaison group would keep a watching brief on this.

**Action: Liaison Group**

It was noted that the Operator had already carried out some preliminary site preparatory work, such as the building of a weighbridge roadway. There was some discussion as to whether this was permitted as not all of the pre-conditions had been completed. It was agreed that the Liaison Group should seek clarification from ESCC as to what work on site was permitted and how they intended to monitor the nine pre-conditions. Paul undertook to meet with ESCC as soon as possible.

**Action: Paul Nicholson**

There was concern that the previous Operator did not restore the site and the residents did not want to see the current Operator allowed to 'get-away' with not fulfilling his obligations in this regard. Paul and Carole noted that it was now seen as best practice in the industry for an Operator to put into escrow ongoing monies towards the final restoration of the site, based on a proportion of each tonne extracted. The Liaison Group undertook to discuss this possibility with the Operator.

**Action: Liaison Group**

## **6. Publicity/Keeping residents Informed**

It was agreed that regular updates in the Parish Magazines of both Plumpton and East Chiltington would be sufficient form of communication. The deadlines for the Plumpton magazine for August and September are 15<sup>th</sup> July and 10<sup>th</sup> August respectively.

**Action: Paul Nicholson  
and Charles Dampney**

## **7. Date of Liaison Group Meeting with Operator**

This had been suggested by the Operator as Friday 4<sup>th</sup> August. Due to holiday commitments this was not possible. Paul undertook to confirm a new date – NOW CONFIRMED AS MONDAY 31 JULY AT 7.15PM IN COMMITTEE ROOM.

**Action: Paul Nicholson**

## **8. Date of next Residents' Committee meeting**

The next meeting of the Residents' Committee will be at 7.30pm on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> August in the Village Hall.

**Action: All**