

002/06

## Novington Sandpit Residents' Committee

### Minutes of Meeting Held on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> August 2006 7.30pm, Plumpton Village Hall – Committee Room

**Present:** Mike and Julie Barnard; Barbara Cheal; Laurie Collins; Charles Dampney; Tim Davies; Jean and Neville Eagle; Jane Gane; Jane George; Veronica Harris; John & Carol Hendry; Tony Hutson; Graham Inglis; Jeanie Muddle; Mr & Mrs Richard Muirhead; Paul & Carole Nicholson; Julie Russell; John Sheeran; Brenda Watson (in place of Christine Thompson); Teresa Wells

**Others who had expressed interest in helping/unable to attend meeting:** Mr & Mrs Robin Akers; Gordon Barr; John and Sue Bonnett; Kevin Cohen; Mr & Mrs Stephen Galletly; Nigel Hills; David Holmes; Sally Huband; Rod MacLaren; Mr & Mrs Clive Mountford; John Muddle; Gary & Lindsey Smith; Sue Smyth; David Tetley; Christine Thompson; Dominic Williams; Katie Wride

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

#### 1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> July were approved by those present.

#### 2. Matters Arising

a) At the last meeting Katie Wride had undertaken to take photographs of the verges on both sides of Plumpton Lane and along Station Road to provide an accurate record of their condition prior to the commencement of work by the Operator. Paul Nicholson reported that this work had now been completed, and he had a CD-ROM available for viewing should it be required. Highways had said that this was a sound step for the village to have taken, and the meeting expressed thanks to Katie for undertaking this exercise.

b) Paul Nicholson mentioned that he had met the deadline last month to get a piece in the August Parish Magazine. He undertook to ensure that he submitted something in time for the September edition. The meeting was content with the approach taken. It was suggested that use could also be made of the Parish website to record minutes of meetings, etc.

**Action: Paul Nicholson**

#### 3. Novington Sandpit Liaison Group Meeting

Paul Nicholson summarised the meeting that had been held on 31<sup>st</sup> July with the Operator. The following summarise the main points arising:

- The meeting was attended by seven residents of Plumpton or East Chiltonton as elected by this Residents' Committee. The Operator was represented by Steve Dudman, Douglas Symes and Ron Carson. ESCC was represented by Meg Stroude (Councillor) and Jeremy Patterson (case officer).

- It was agreed that Meg Stroude should Chair the Liaison Group.
- Steve Dudman had confirmed that he is the freehold owner of Novington Sandpit, having purchased it from Mr Blaker. He acknowledged that it was a sensitive site and intended to operate it in a sensitive manner. His long-term objective is to create a 'pleasurable piece of land', which would be achieved through the retention of certain habitats within the site, through the translocation of habitats around the site as workings proceeded, and through the replacement of habitats at a later stage.
- Steve Dudman made it clear that the details of the exact workings of the site will only be known when the land is actually worked.
- The objectives of the Liaison Group were agreed as i) to offer comments to the Operator on how things are running; ii) to receive information from the Operator on the stages of the development; iii) to provide a line of communication with the public.
- Nine pre-development conditions had been imposed on the Operator. To date only three of these had been discharged so far: condition 19 (dust mitigation); condition 22 (wheel washing); and condition 23 (protective fenceline along Long Wood).
- It was agreed that any papers backing up the Operator's submissions to the case officer, Jeremy Patterson, regarding the pre-conditions, would be also circulated to Paul Nicholson. This would allow residents to comment on them to ESCC, but the final approvals would be under the control of ESCC.
- Once the pre-conditions had been discharged, the on-site preparatory works would last for at least 8-10 weeks. Steve Dudman had warned that unfortunately this period would be particularly noisy, but not representative of the on-going levels of activity or noise in the future.
- Douglas Symes was seeking advice from the consultant ecologist as to whether a licence was required to work so close to the out-lying badger sett. Douglas Symes also noted that the main interest in the site related to invertebrates, and he explained that it is the Operator's intention to retain at least 25% of the habitat resource through the working life of the pit.
- Paul Nicholson had asked for confirmation from the Operator that lorries would not use Plumpton Lane to the North. Steve Dudman confirmed this.
- Paul Nicholson asked whether a 30mph speed restriction could be placed on Plumpton Lane to the south of the site access. Both Meg Stroude and Jeremy Patterson indicated that this was unlikely to be achieved as representation would be needed from a large number of residents, and that the accident record did not warrant such a restriction. However, Jeremy Patterson did undertake to review it with the Area Highways Manager.
- It was noted that residents felt that signage would be helpful, in the vicinity of the junction of Plumpton Lane with the B2116 warning road users of the fact that heavy lorries would be turning in/out of the lane. Jeremy Patterson undertook to discuss this with the Area Highways Manager.
- Once the site was operative, Steve Dudman noted that most activity would occur during the mornings and early afternoons, with lorry loading after 5pm very unlikely.
- Steve Dudman explained that a submersible pump would have to operate 24 hrs per day, but this would be electrically operated and would create no discernible noise.

- The meeting noted that if residents had a noise issue, Steve Dudman and/or the site manager, Ron Carson, could be advised together with Jeremy Patterson and if necessary, the Environmental Health Officer at the District Council.
- Steve Dudman noted that it would be necessary to erect fencing along the route of the diverted footpath to prevent people from entering the pit site. This was a necessary precaution for Health and Safety reasons. The Operator will be regulated by the Health & Safety Executive, and people will only be able to enter the site by invitation. The Operator mentioned that he does own two fields adjacent to the site from which it may be possible for the public to obtain views over the site.
- Douglas Symes mentioned that there is a Discharge Licence from the Environment Agency. This regulates the volumes and quality of water discharged from the site. Steve Dudman mentioned that it would be necessary to carry out a hydrological survey of the existing pit to assess the configuration of the sand deposit below water.
- It was agreed that there was little point in having a further Liaison Group meeting until the pre-conditions had been satisfied.

#### **4. Matters Arising From Report of Liaison Group Meeting**

a) The meeting noted that the beneficial ownership had still not been reflected at the Land Registry and that clarification of the exact status of Dudman's ownership was still requested.

**Action: Paul Nicholson**

b) The meeting noted that the preparatory works would be noisy. It was queried whether the Operator would be restricted to the same hours of working (as for the excavation consent) during this preparatory period.

**Action: Paul Nicholson**

c) There was some discussion regarding the ecological aspects of the site. Tony Hutson was hoping to meet with the consultant ecologist shortly to seek a better understanding of how he carried out his survey. Tony undertook to report back to the Residents' Committee on various aspects such as badgers, protected bird species.

**Action: Tony Hutson**

d) There was considerable support to the idea of a 30 mph speed restriction being imposed, and the meeting encouraged Paul Nicholson to set up a petition process in Plumpton following consultation with the Parish Council.

**Action: Paul Nicholson**

e) The meeting acknowledged that if residents had any evidence of lorries speeding or behaving dangerously, not only would number plates and timings need to be recorded, but also photographic evidence.

**Action: All**

f) The meeting noted that the Operator would be using 30 tonne lorries with fixed wheel bases. It was therefore inevitable that there would be damage to the grass verges particularly in the area near bends or junctions. The video taken by Katie Wride would be helpful evidence of the current condition of the verges.

g) Carole Nicholson mentioned that the Sussex Ouse Conservation Society (of which she is Treasurer) regularly monitors the water quality of various sections of the River Ouse. This is achieved on a sample basis using metering devices, which measure ammonia, oxygen and nitrate levels. They also check the number of invertebrates in the water, using kick-sampling techniques. Any measurements, which give cause for alarm, are passed to the Environment Agency for further investigation (the EA no longer having the resources to carry out the tests themselves). It is thought that this work by SOCS is unique in the UK. The Operator will be discharging from the sandpit into a stream which ultimately feeds into the Bevern (a tributary of the Ouse). The Bevern is known to be attractive for spawning sea trout. However, suspended sand is lethal to fish and SOCS are concerned about the consequences of such discharge. SOCS are willing to add to their regular sampling a site along the Ferrings, but point out that a special meter (costing approximately £600) that can measure sand, mud and other minerals would also be required to make their sampling more meaningful. Unfortunately SOCS would not be able to finance the full purchase cost of such a meter.

The meeting discussed the issue and proposed that submissions should be made to both Plumpton and East Chilmington Parish Councils for match funding of £200 each, with SOCS paying the remaining £200. Brenda Watson and Charles Dampney undertook to take these requests forward.

**Action: Brenda Watson and Charles Dampney/  
Carole Nicholson(SOCS)**

##### **5. Date of Next Residents' Committee Meeting**

Although no date had yet been fixed for the Liaison Group meeting, residents felt that the momentum should be maintained and that the next meeting should be fixed for September. Attendees had generally found the meeting helpful and a useful channel for communication and thanked Paul Nicholson for his hard work.

Accordingly the next meeting will be **at 7.30pm on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2006 in the Village Hall.**

**Action: All**