

004/06

Novington Sandpit Residents' Committee

Minutes of Meeting Held on Wednesday 15th November 2006 7.30pm, Plumpton Village Hall – Committee Room

Present: Barbara Cheal; Kevin Cohen; Laurie Collins; Charles Dampney; Jane Gane; Mrs Galletly; Veronica Harris; Nigel Hills; Tony Hutson; Graham Inglis; Jeanie Muddle; Richard Muirhead; Paul & Carole Nicholson; Julie Russell; Sue Smyth; Christine Thompson; Katie Wride

Apologies: Mr & Mrs Robin Akers; Mike and Julie Barnard; Gordon Barr; John and Sue Bonnett; Tim Davies; Jean and Neville Eagle; Mr Galletly; Jane George; Veronica Harris; John and Carol Hendry; David Holmes; Sally Huband; Rod MacLaren; Mr & Mrs Clive Mountford; John Muddle; John Sheeran; Gary & Lindsey Smith; Ginny Smith; David Tetley; Teresa Wells; Dominic Williams

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

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 21st September were approved by those present.

2. Matters Arising

a) Paul Nicholson noted that updates had been written in the September and November Parish magazines. He thought that he had met the deadline for the December magazine, but had been advised that the deadline had been brought forward and he had not been told of this. He said that he would obtain the submission dates for the 2007 magazines. **Action: Paul Nicholson**

b) Paul Nicholson reported that both East Chiltington and Plumpton Parish Councils had each kindly agreed to help fund £150 towards the purchase of a turbidity meter by Sussex Ouse Conservation Society. East Chiltington Parish Council had already paid their amount, and Christine Thompson undertook to arrange for Plumpton Parish Council to do likewise at their next meeting on 21st November. Paul noted that SOCS had already started taking regular samples (about twice per month) at Ferrings Bridge so that data, prior to sand extraction, could be compared with the water quality during the extraction phase. All residents expressed their thanks to the respective councils for their support. Paul said that he had put the Operator, Steve Dudman, on notice that these checks would be taking place.

Action: Christine Thompson

3. Pre-conditions

Paul Nicholson reported that the phase 1 Archaeological Survey had been completed. The eight test digs had revealed nothing of significance. As a result, this pre-condition imposed by the County Council, had been satisfied. Further phases of

the Archaeological survey would take place during the course of the extraction process.

Paul Nicholson noted that the County Council was still awaiting the Conservation Management Plan from the Operator. *(Post-meeting note: Paul has written to Mr Dudman, copied to Jeremy Patterson of ESCC, expressing disappointment that this has not yet been forthcoming, as on behalf of residents, he had hoped to have an opportunity to comment on the proposed Plan).*

Tony Hutson said that he had written to Mr Dudman a few months ago seeking authority to visit the site occasionally to monitor the wildlife. He had not yet received a reply. It was suggested that he should write to Mr Dudman's advisor, Mr Symes. Tony reported that he had been in touch with Alex Tate (Council Environmental Representative), Jeremy Patterson and Natural England. He is consulting also the Records at the Sussex Biodiversity Centre and the Sussex Ornithological Society. He intends to write an environmental/habitat/wildlife statement to send to the Ecological Survey company (ECOSA) being used by Dudman and hopes to meet with ECOSA to ensure that all views of residents are taken into account. Tony requested residents to let him have any further observations that they would like to see included in his statement.

Action: Tony Hutson

Paul Nicholson advised the meeting that it is his view that the County Council is unlikely to enforce the remaining pre-conditions to prevent the Operator opening the site. Such conditions would still need to be met but essentially were ongoing issues through the site's productive life.

Activities on Site

Paul Nicholson reported to the meeting that the Operator, Steve Dudman, had invited Paul to a site meeting on Saturday 11th November. The following observations were made:

- A new recruit to the team has been made, living at Millers' Mead in Plumpton Lane
- The site hut and weigh-bridge are complete, together with a staff mess facility and secure storage.
- New machinery is on site.
- The haulage road in the site has been cut through to the end of the old pit and the lake edges on the Northern side will be dredged for rubbish and tidied.
- The stockpile area is located approximately where the end of the old pit finishes ie roughly in the middle of the whole site. Here will be the turning area for trucks, where they will wait and be loaded. Only the tracked shovel and dumpers will go further east.
- A gully across the Western edge has been cleared, but this has made a mess of the footpath. This will be tidied and a definite route across the access road will be established.
- At the access point off Plumpton Lane kerbstones are to be installed. Dudman has decided that it will be necessary to erect gates nearer the road as it has been found that other lorries and vehicles, unconnected with Dudman, have been using the entrance for parking. Dudman assured Paul that the gates would be open in time for his own drivers to drive straight in.

(Post meeting note: Paul has written to Dudman asking how he will ensure his drivers do not arrive before the gates are open, to avoid causing an obstruction on the road and nuisance to nearby residents).

- Bunting will be hung from the overhead power lines crossing the site, which will be visible. This is a necessary Health and Safety requirement.
- On the new excavation area the top soil has been stripped from about 1/3rd of the area. The bund-line, closest to Stantons Cottages, has been staked out, but this particular bund will not be built before the Spring.
- The overburden soil has been piled too high. Paul noted that Mr Dudman had issued instructions to reduce this and also close the gap between the two piles.
- Whilst the sand is of mixed quality, there are seams of premium building sand running horizontally across the site. The sand appears to be in distinct bands and thins rapidly to the North. This suggests that little digging will occur in the North of the site. The land rises to the South-East and this is the most likely area for quality sand.
- The sound of the quarry extraction appears to be fairly limited to the West, but louder to the East. The construction of the bund to the East and North should reduce this. The beepers on the vehicles are probably the most obtrusive noise, but Mr Dudman is hoping to reduce this as soon as possible with the use of infra-red equipment. The haulage trucks will, however, continue to have beepers.
- It is anticipated that truck movements to and from the pit will commence during December 2006.

4. Traffic

a) Paul Nicholson was able to advise the meeting that he was getting very useful input from Stuart Green, who mans the level crossing, regarding the movement of trucks through the village. Paul would ask Stuart to kindly continue with this reporting. **Action: Paul Nicholson**

b) During the course of Paul Nicholson's site meeting with Mr Dudman, Paul had mentioned to him that heavy trucks had been seen passing through the village from the North and also back through the village from the South. Paul had acknowledged that not all of these were attributable to Dudman, but he reminded Mr Dudman of his verbal commitment made at the initial open meeting with residents in the Summer, in which he had indicated that he would try to ensure that all his own company vehicles only entered and exited from the site in a Southerly direction. Mr Dudman said that he would now find this difficult to achieve, particularly if his drivers were delivering to customers in the North of the region, eg Burgess Hill.

In the light of these discussions, Paul had sought advice from Jeremy Patterson of ESCC, who also confirmed that he had understood from Mr Dudman that his own trucks would be accessing the site from the South. Mr Patterson said that he would seek advice from the Highways Division and the Police, as to how the weight limit restriction on the bridge south of the race course can be enforced.

The meeting was concerned to hear of these discussions, in particular with regard to the safety of the elderly and young children. Paul requested that residents try to record the truck movements logging their number plates, timings, direction and ideally take a photograph. Nigel Hills said that he would contact the village

Webmaster (Stuart Green) to set up a web-based logging system for reported instances.

Action: Nigel Hills

The meeting requested that Paul Nicholson write to Mr Dudman, on their behalf, advising him of their concern and reminding him of his commitment made in the earlier meeting. The Committee would review what further action was needed, once a response had been received.

Action: Paul Nicholson

6. Date of Next Liaison Group Meeting

In the light of the above concerns about traffic movements, it was suggested that Paul Nicholson should contact Mr Dudman to arrange a site meeting for Liaison Group members as soon as possible.

Action: Paul Nicholson

7. Date of next Residents' Committee Meeting

This will be held on **Thursday 25th January 2007 at 7.30pm** in the Committee Room in the Village Hall. However, it was suggested that in view of the seriousness of residents' concerns regarding traffic it might be necessary to hold a meeting before then at short notice.

Action: All