

Planning Application: 2014/0038/CNT - Highcroft Quarry, Gurney Slade

(Deposit of inert waste materials for ground remodelling and restoration to agriculture)

Consultation Response from Binegar Parish Council

Although the application site is within the parish of Ashwick a large part of it is along the boundary of Binegar Parish and the main community affected is Binegar/Gurney Slade.

At its meeting on 4th February Binegar Parish Council (BPC) decided to recommend refusal of the above application; refusal reasons are given below. If the application is approved BPC also has other observations and considerations for usage conditions.

The meeting was attended by residents whose houses are closest to the application site and would be affected if the application is approved.

Recommendation: REFUSAL

Reasons:

- Road safety -
The section of the A37 that would be used by lorries to/from the site has had a number of accidents over recent years, particularly near the junction with Highcroft Lane (incorrectly shown as Station Road on the Site Boundary Plan). The national speed limit applies to both the A37 and Highcroft Lane and there is a risk of accidents, particularly with northbound traffic leaving the A37 at excessive speed. The application does not include any consideration of the increased risk from more lorry movements at this junction.
The application incorrectly states that there are passing places along Highcroft Lane between the A37 and the site entrance; there are none.
In wet weather traffic leaving the site will carry mud on the wheels that will then transfer to the road surface increasing the risk of accidents on the A37 itself and the junction with Highcroft Lane. The application does not include any consideration of this risk nor proposes measures to alleviate or remove the risk.
In dry weather traffic leaving the site will create dust which will be a road use hazard and also affect the amenity of the residences along Highcroft Lane. The application does not include any consideration of this potential hazard and amenity impact nor proposes measures to alleviate or remove the risk.
- Noise analysis -
Without any noise impact analysis the application documentation glibly states that the impact of noise can be largely ignored because the area is sparsely populated. This ignores the houses along Highcroft Lane and The Batch that would be directly affected by noise from lorry movements and from heavy machinery working on the site itself. Residents in the wider local community have also made numerous complaints over recent years about noise from events (explosions, 4x4 trails and shooting) taking place in the quarry. No action has been taken to address the historic complaints nor mitigate the noise. This experience supports the BPC position that approval cannot be given without formal analysis of noise impacts.

- Effect on watercourses and flooding -
There has been flooding in Binegar/Gurney Slade in 2012 and 2013 which has been reported to the SCC Flood Team. The major source of surface water emanates from land to the south of the village and into a stream that runs along Binegar Bottom. However the volume of water in the stream is increased by water run-off from Highcroft Quarry that issues through the northern gateway of the quarry and into the stream. We have photographic evidence to support this statement. There is no consideration of this flooding risk in the application documents. Nor consideration of increased health risks or water contamination potentially attributable to water run off from the material imported to the site.

Other observations and considerations:

- HGV movements -
If the application is approved conditions need to be specified to:
 - Limit the maximum number of truck lorry movements per day.
 - Define earliest and latest delivery times.
 - Define a specific route for the lorries to/from the site.
 - Restrict weekend working.
- Hours of working -
Define hours/days of working for operations on the site.
- Enforcement of conditions -
If the application is approved and use conditions defined; how will those conditions be policed and enforced?
BPC invited a representative from the haulage company who transporting the materials to the council meeting. There were a number of disparities between the information provided by this representative and what was actually in the application. These disparities give rise to concerns that the various aspects may be exceeded if the application is approved. He estimated 15,000 lorry loads and, depending on supply, 3-5 years to fill the base to 2.5-3m depth. This would mean an average of 20-30 loads daily on weekdays 0800-1630. On site earth moving machinery would operate 0730-1700.