

## **Input from Len Mann**

(Also representing Gallows Gore Action Group) – 20<sup>th</sup> August 2018

This note provides the Inspector with updated information following our submissions made at consultation stage at the beginning of this year. I am making this input as an individual to be compliant with my original objections. However, the views expressed will be those of our local action group whose members would like me to speak on their behalf. Gallows Gore Action Group comprises some twenty five residents living adjacent to, or very close to, PK-21, Gallows Gore.

### **Gallows Gore Action Group Members:-**

Celia & Len Mann

Jean & Dave Joseph

Julia & Barry Cullimore

Rosemary Khanna

Sarah & Andrew Painter

Olive & Alan Stephenson

Joyce and Trevor Meates

Mary Sparks

Janis and David Chambers

Wendy and Tim Wiggins

Pat and Jon Slaymaker

Doreen and Bunny Farr

Carol, Rog & Debbie Brown

### **1) Introduction**

When it comes to mining and council procedures, we are all basically lay people. We are daunted by 54 page documents, numerous procedures, and unfathomable wording such as ‘soundness’, but we live around this field- this is our home! Collectively we have considerable experience of living in this area with existing quarries and the effect they have upon our lives.

I will stick to the point and discuss new information related to our existing submissions.

### **2) Access.**

We were encouraged by the strength of feeling from people across Purbeck, over the use of Haycrafts Lane to transport the stone. The road is already signed at both ends as unsuitable for heavy good vehicles. The regular walkers, cyclists and motorists know how awkward it can be. It is narrow, steep and difficult enough without any additional very large, lane wide, stone carrying lorries. They would touch both verges, in many places.

It’s been suggested that use of a shorter section of the lane makes this method acceptable, but we cannot agree. Lorries suddenly appearing on Haycrafts lane from a new entrance to Landers/Haysom current quarry is surely more dangerous than if they entered the lane from the main road. Yet access right from the main road has already been discounted by DCC. It’s been stated that the stone will only be extracted one or two months a year, but this will be mid-summer, the busiest time of the year when caravans, general holiday makers, walkers and cyclists, use the lane. Many walkers use the lane to access the bus stop on the main road, at the top of Haycrafts Lane, for access to Swanage and Poole using the 40 Breezer.

I don't think we emphasised the effect of mud on the road enough. We see regularly how local stone lorries driving across a field deposit copious amounts of mud which greatly adds to the danger, especially when it rains. On a steep lane the mud will be worked and washed up and down the lane, a significant hazard. The speed limit on the lane is 60mph. DCC have informed us that the verges are protected and mustn't be disturbed. Apart from the entrance and exit to the lane a passing or manoeuvring space would surely be needed when lorries are in use. So in fact a lot of the verge would be destroyed.

We also understand that the hedge opposite our houses is protected. Blue posts used to be visible, indicating this status.

With regard to both entrances onto Haycrafts Lane, we draw your attention to the issue of Sight Lines/Vision Splays. The 60mph stopping distance in bad weather far exceeds the distance to the first corner.

For all the reasons above we believe that access via Haycrafts Lane is completely unacceptable.

### **3) The High Number of Residential Properties Directly Affected.**

To recap, PK-21 is a very unusual site in that it has **seven** adjacent properties (One is a plot with planning permission) and a further seven properties in close proximity. No other site has anywhere near this number, in fact most have no adjacent properties at all. My house wall is less than 5m from the proposed site boundary.

A major concern is structural damage to our properties. Our houses are built on the same stone bed that is to be quarried. We've also heard of tunnels directly below some of our houses and we are concerned about damage through vibration or even the appearance of a sinkhole under our properties. Large deep saucer-like depressions have appeared locally over recent years with the collapse of a mature oak tree in a field close to Gallows Gore. A professional surveyor has warned us about the potential of structural damage to the properties.

One of the proposed mitigation aspects for noise, dust etc., is the standoff distance and this is where we would like to add further comment. DCC have told me that in their opinion, and with advice from their planning applications department, that the gap from the quarry to the properties should be 50-75 metres (refer to appendix D- email from DCC 26/1/17, last two paragraphs). DCC have visited the site with the land owner and tape measure, measuring a distance from my back fence into the field. This is presumably where this figure was confirmed?

Landers/Haysom have stated in their submission:- *'The excavation would be located at a greater distance from adjacent houses than other current quarry operations.'*

We don't think this is very reassuring. We are aware that these types of comments hold no sway when it comes to the planning application stage. These considerations start again from scratch at Planning Committee with different elected councillors, with different priorities and historically a much smaller distance is set.

To help this application to be 'sound' we think the currently drawn boundary, right up to the garden fences of the properties should be redrawn to the proposed extraction point. We've taken DCC at their original word (50-75m) and drawn a new boundary at 55m from the garden fences and reservoir infrastructure (see appendix A). Clearly the deep (8m+) extraction can't go right next to the remaining boundaries, including dry stone walls, so we've allowed a 15m standoff here. This new outline would let every owner know where they stand for the future as extraction could occur right up to this line. Looking at appendix A you can see that there would be

significantly less stone to extract from the site. This would beg the question as to whether the site would still be commercially viable. If, as we suspect, the answer is no, then are we being misled as to the likely standoff distance? It feels like we are being told a standoff figure that has no chance of becoming a reality. To be 'sound' we think the application should be clear up-front and we ask DCC to clarify this point with a reasonable standoff distance, acceptable to all parties. A distance that would be marked on the plan.

#### 4) An Island Among Quarries

We've also talked about the main row of residential houses being an island surrounded by quarries, but we don't think we've illustrated this point clearly enough. Please refer to appendix B, an aerial plan of the site. In fact we disagree that these sites, existing and proposed, should even be called quarries! Past quarrying has been underground. That's still the case in many other areas, like Portland, but in Purbeck we're really talking about Open Cast Mining. That's a much more accurate description. You can see the result in appendix B with the current quarries west of Haycrafts Lane, adjacent to most of our houses, a large scar on the landscape. With reference to our houses, the current quarry is mostly hidden at ground level behind a high hedge and the lay of the land also hides it from road level. The quarry does still have its impact with the constant clack-clack noise of the machines and worse, the dust which frequently coats our cars, washing and houses. However, the quarry area is established and we have had to live with it and the recent expansions.

However, Gallows Gore is a completely different affair. The whole field is on view from the houses as well as from the whole of the valley. If PK-21 also becomes an open cast mine, some of us will be totally enclosed. In the summer months, the best time of the year, the noise and dust all around will be intolerable. There will be no break from the dust, whichever way the wind is blowing. Apart from the effect on our cars, homes and washing, goodness knows what it's doing to our health. Lorries going right past the front of our properties, both outside and inside the stone service centre, will only add to these problems.

#### 5) AONB

AONB issues have been covered for a group of quarries in session 10, but we think it's necessary to emphasise the difference with Gallows Gore. It would be the first significant new quarry to be visible from the Swanage valley and Purbeck hills and it could pave the way for others to follow, massively affecting the beauty of the landscape. The AONB officer's original objections were robust. Later comment mentioned mitigation. The DCC officials I've spoken to are dismissive of the AONB status.

They've said comments to me like:- *'If it's inside the dedicated mineral area, then that overrides AONB considerations.'*

This point is also made in the Site Survey:-

*'AONB Team consider that this site could lead to visual/landscape impacts on the AONB. However, the site is within the Purbeck Stone Area of Search identified in the 2014 Minerals Strategy.'*

We are also told. *'The AONB officer's predecessor had a much more relaxed attitude to quarrying.'*

It must be difficult for the AONB officer to be truly independent when he works in the same offices as the DCC officers.

AONB is often given as a reason to refuse planning for individual houses in the area. The affects of a quarry on AONB is huge compared to a house, and it should receive the most serious consideration.

#### 6) Reservoirs and Infrastructure

I won't repeat all the objections from Wessex Water. However, one of their objections was that the two applications, Gallows Gore and Quarr Farm would isolate their infrastructure, making the reservoirs an island surrounded by quarries. We can't help thinking that DCC have solved this particular problem by removing one of the applications. This point adds to the injustice of Quarr Farm being removed from the plan and Gallows Gore staying in (see below).

#### 7) Quarr Farm Comparison (previously PK-08)

Quarr Farm was removed from the draft plan at the end of 2017. We fully support this decision but we don't understand why Gallows Gore was left in, when it has an even greater number of issues. Here's a comparison. (Appendix C applies)

##### Access

The two fields are adjacent and could be linked. That would mean that the lorries would have to cross water mains, which would have to be protected, but that's already proposed to happen with Gallows Gore access. Quarr Farm could then have made agreement with Landers/Haysom, OR Quarr Farm could have been sold to Landers/Haysom. Some commercial agreement could have been made. We don't believe the use of Haycrafts Lane is in any way acceptable but as a comparison, we don't see access to be significantly different between the sites.

##### AONB

Gallows Gore is at a higher elevation and is visible from further afield than Quarr Farm.

##### Surrounding houses.

Number of adjacent houses:- Quarr Farm **two**, Gallows Gore **seven!**

##### Reservoir Proximity

In our opinion this is the biggest problem for Quarr Farm. However, by allowing the appropriate standoff from the reservoirs and infrastructure there is still an area to be quarried at least as big as Gallows Gore. Basically the standoff for houses at Gallows Gore is replaced by the standoff from reservoirs and infrastructure at Quarr Farm.

##### Underground Tunnels, archaeology etc.

Gallows Gore has tunnels in two areas at least. We understand that Quarr Farm has no tunnels.

Quarr Farm was rightly removed from the plan which surely means that Gallows Gore, with even more problems, should have been removed at the same time.

#### 8) Wildlife Habitat Destruction

Here is more detail on the wildlife situation. The south east corner of the field has already been excluded from the site due to its butterfly habitat. However, the main part of the field also supports a host of wildlife, some of which would be affected by the mining. Currently cows graze the field which encourages insects and many bird species that eat them, including flocks of starlings. We spend many hours gazing out across the field and we are amazed at the different species that regularly use it.

Rabbit, fox, deer, starling, sparrow, greenfinch, goldfinch, swift, swallow, kestrel, rook, crow, jackdaw, pigeon, blackbird, thrush etc., but also badger, stoat, barn owl, whitethroat, stonechat, wheatear, redstart, flycatcher, and several other rarer species. I'm sure that many of these species would still visit the field in the quiet months of quarrying, although excluding the cows would make quite a difference.

Underground is a different story. There are tunnels under the field, the extent of which is yet to be confirmed. We do know there is access to these tunnels both east and west of the site. Bats regularly hunt at dusk by our houses. The tunnels are an ideal habitat for bats, possibly including the rare greater horseshoe bat. However, all bat species and their roosts are protected in law.

## **9) Planning Blight**

The new information here is the consideration that our properties are suffering planning blight. While planning permission has not yet been sought, the effect is the same. Merely including the site in the draft plan has caused a drop in value of the properties by 30%, according to a professional surveyor. One property was effectively sold in August 2016. The existence of the Gallows Gore application appeared in the purchaser's search and they withdrew from the sale (This was how most of us learnt of the existence of the Gallows Gore application; but that's another story). We bought our house in July 2014 principally for its view. If that view is going to be spoilt then of course the application would significantly affect its value.

The main problem here is the effect on peoples lives. At least one resident is trapped, unable to sell their home at a price that would allow them to move closer to their family, but also unable to afford to stay!

## **10) Site Assessment Errors**

These include water runoff, reservoirs omission, visibility from Harmans Cross, access contradiction, no explanation of the change of goalposts.

We hope to hear details of the proposed corrections and when a new document will be available.

## **11) Mitigation**

Mitigation is the buzzword we keep hearing. Here's a new summary of the potential mitigation already proposed:-

### **Mitigation over Residential Properties**

Visual issues and noise can be reduced by a standoff from the houses. Other local quarries have huge piles of overspill next to the holes. We've heard that it is intended to leave nothing above ground at Gallows Gore and it would be reassuring to see this specified in the plan. We don't think bunds will help, it's a further interruption of the view.

### **Mitigation over AONB**

It's difficult to see how you can hide a large scar across the landscape. In this case bunds could help a little, perhaps, but the field is on a slope and bunds would have very limited scope to hide the scar from the valley and Purbeck hills.

### **Mitigation over Access**

Nothing can mitigate the dangers and disruption that would be caused by the use of Haycrafts Lane. Past experience has shown that promises to keep roads clean or to protect the verges are unlikely to be achievable in practice.

#### Mitigation over Archaeology, Old and New

A full assessment of the archaeology is yet to be made. If Roman or more recent workings are found, it's difficult to see what mitigation there could be except for leaving the site alone.

#### Mitigation over Property Value

Prospective buyers will perceive the potential and unknown impact of a new quarry as a major decision making factor, regardless of any proposed mitigation. With the applicant saying they don't need the stone for ten to fifteen years, this blight situation could last for decades.

### **12) Conclusion**

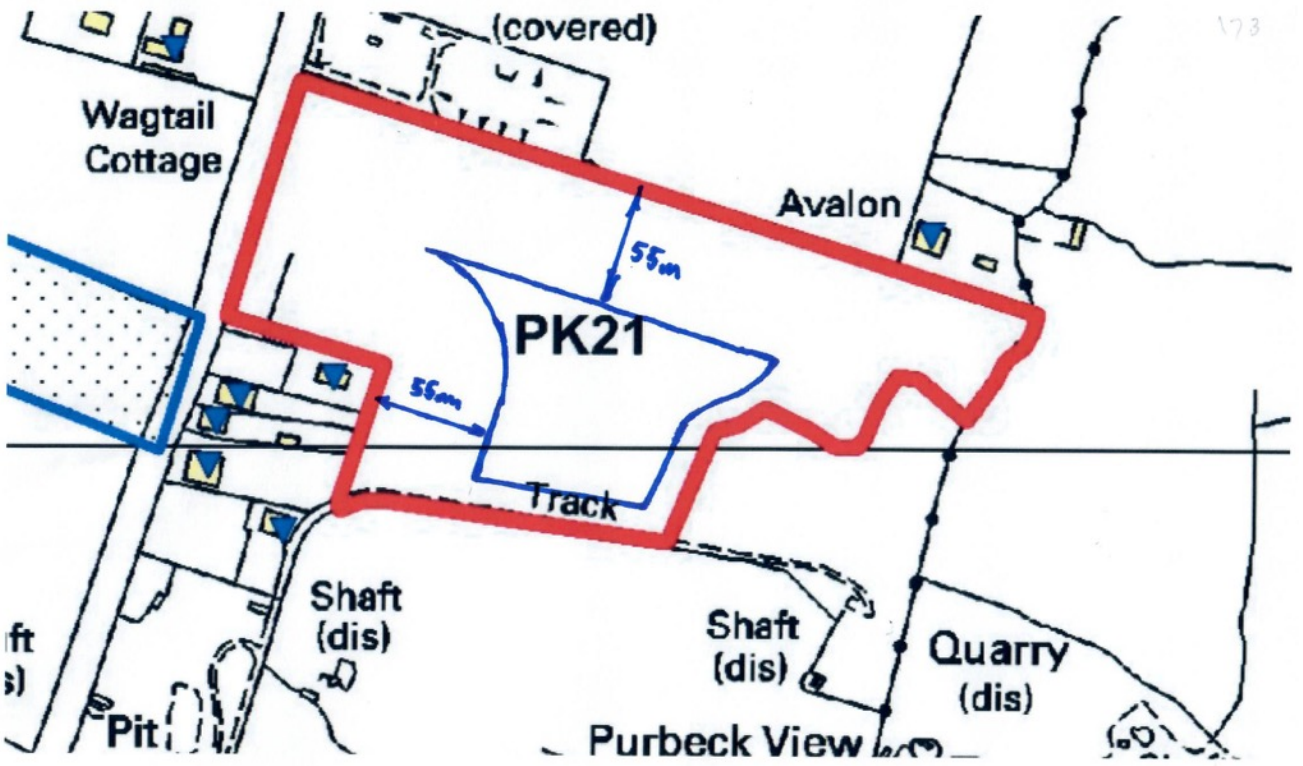
There are many difficult considerations over the mining of PK-21, Gallows Gore. Access, High Number of Residential Properties, AONB, Isolation of Houses, Reservoir Infrastructure, Wildlife Habitat, Archaeological Impact, Planning Blight, and more.

It's the quantity of serious issues that sets this application apart. Mitigation is possible to improve the impact for some of the issues, but not others. Gallows Gore would be the first site to make a scar viewable from the whole Swanage valley and Purbeck hills. Leaving the issues to be sorted out at the planning stage will only prolong the uncertainty, causing stress and leaving peoples lives on hold, possibly for decades.

There is an important market for Purbeck Stone, but at what cost! There must be a limit to the effect this application has on local people's lives. With so many issues to try to mitigate we can only request that Gallows Gore is removed from the minerals plan.

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Appendix A

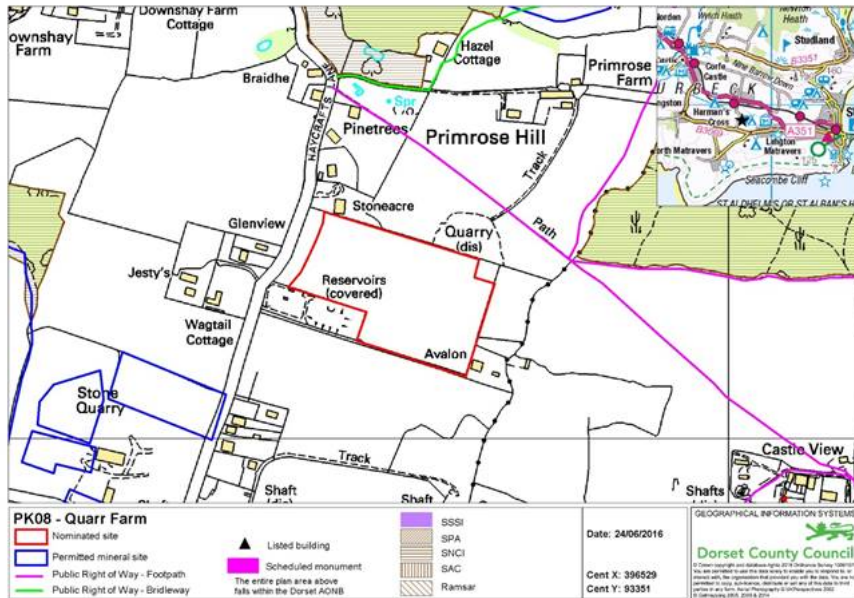


## Appendix B



## Appendix C

### Quarr Farm Proposal (Previously PK-08)





## Appendix D

RE: Timescale, Gallows Gore

**Subject:** RE: Timescale, Gallows Gore  
**From:** Trevor G Badley <t.g.badley@dorsetcc.gov.uk>  
**Date:** 26/01/2017, 10:34  
**To:** Len Mann <len@starmann.co.uk>

Good morning Len,

I realise you and your neighbours are disappointed by this delay. You are not the only ones caught in this type of situation.

You actually have received this information hot off the press – we haven't even been to Committee to inform them of the proposed changes to the timetable, and get their approval. So please be aware that what I told you is still just estimates, subject to final approval.

I do appreciate that your receiving the information has been in response to a direct query from you. I will try to remember to keep you informed.

For information, the Committee we will be going to next is the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals and Waste Policy Joint Advisory Committee (JAC). It is expected that it will meet on 23<sup>rd</sup> February – keep an eye on the website for information, at this link:  
<http://dorset.moderngov.co.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=280>

The upcoming, focussed consultation will be on waste issues only, but there will be a report to the JAC on mineral sites to provide Members with an indication of our current thinking on the various sites.

To give you an informal update on the Gallows Gore site – I have spoken to colleagues in our development management team, and asked them how they would respond if the Gallows Gore site came in as a planning application – which it could at any time.

Their **informal** response was that, should the site ever be developed, they would expect that a buffer of around 50m – 75m to be put in place between the houses and the edge of the working. This would be for both Avalon to the north-east and you and your neighbours on Haycrafts Lane. **Please note that this is not a fixed or absolute figure – such details are determined at the planning application stage. Nor is it a final decision on the Gallows Gore site and how we deal with it – that will be taken by Members before the plan is finalised for submission to Government.** I am just giving you an indication of my current thinking – if it is included in the final version of the plan, I would expect that there will be an expectation that a substantial buffer will be included.

Thanks

Trevor

Trevor Badley || Minerals and Waste Planning Policy || Environment and the Economy



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