

# WAGE NEWS

March 2023

NEW GRAVEL EXTRACTION  
BOARDS NOW AVAILABLE  
- see over

Well over year into our campaign, we wanted to share an update on the current status of the planning application for gravel extraction at Palmers Farm by Wight Building Materials and our efforts in fighting the proposals.

## Independent transport report reveals alarming flaws



A farm vehicle showing narrowness of Alverstone Road

A report commissioned by WAGE to objectively review the proposed transportation of extracted gravel from Palmers Farm by Wight Building Materials Ltd (WBM) identified numerous highway safety issues.

WAGE instructed specialists in road transport planning, YES Engineering Group to undertake the detailed 33-page Transport Report after fundamental issues that needed to be addressed were highlighted last June by Hampshire County Council (HCC). HCC were invited to give an impartial view on the application due to a conflict of interest for Island Roads (who have the same parent company as Wight Building Materials).

Technical Director at YES Engineering, Kathryn Backhouse says "We have looked in greater detail at the areas of concern raised by Hampshire County Council. These relate to a host of factors including site access, road safety and access, particularly with regard to visibility and including at the junction of Alverstone Road and Brocks Copse Road, and overall suitability of the proposed route" "It is our conclusion that the proposed route contravenes numerous Local IOW Plan, Highway Safety and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) policies. It is clear that the roadworks that are needed to facilitate safe access of 20 tonne lorries to and from Palmers Farm along the route specified cannot be

achieved and would have a detrimental impact on the rural nature of the area." The report was submitted to the IOW council planning department and considered by HCC along with additional submissions by WBM which detail increasingly substantial adaptations in terms of vegetation removal, verge and tree loss, speed limit and junction amendments including road widening at the junction with Whippingham Road. HCC are requesting further information regarding tracking of passing places and forward visibility along Brock Copse and Alverstone Road before making their recommendation to the planning department. HCC's response can be read in full on the IOW council planning application pages.

## Quarry dust serious health risk

**Is Silica an invisible killer? Concern is so high that it is being described by some as 'the new asbestos'.**

Recent research and case law into microscopic particles of silica that exist within sand dust show that the dust can travel many kilometres and is responsible for the inflammatory lung disease silicosis. It also exacerbates, asthma, breathing difficulties, COPD and other lung diseases, particularly in the very young, the very old and those with existing lung conditions.

The most dangerous time for silicates to be released into the atmosphere is at the point of extraction from the ground when they become airborne, so you are at risk to this debilitating disease if you live near a gravel quarry.

The nearest houses are just 70 metres away from the proposed quarry at Palmers Farm and a large number of houses in Wootton village, the school and recreation ground, are within 350 metres. Additionally, the HGVs transporting this material through Wootton, Whippingham and Arreton will be spreading the dust further.

### **Sand and gravel quarrying should not be located close to housing**

This is the conclusion drawn from evidence gathered internationally in recent years with many countries already using legislation to stop extraction being sited near residential areas. The UK is shortly expected to follow the same course although a Private Members Bill tabled in Parliament in December 2021 to limit sand and gravel quarrying to a minimum of 1,000 metres from any residential area is still awaiting a second hearing. This Bill was supported by our own MP Bob Seely. The World Health Organisation have stated "there is no evidence of a safe level of exposure or threshold below which no adverse health effects occur".

There is ample evidence and information available on the Health and Safety Executive and the NHS web sites to confirm this threat. But will those who make this planning decision take the time to be better informed of the potential serious health risk to Wootton residents from this proposed gravel quarry? We are also calling for the island's mineral plan to be reviewed to take the newly emerging health research into account. In addition to the transport problems of the scheme and harm to the environment it would cause, the planning application must be rejected on health grounds. Commercial pressures should not prevail over the concerns of local residents.

## Planning application update

We are still waiting for confirmation of when the application by Wight Building Materials Ltd will go before the IOW Council Planning Committee. Given the impact of the plans and the additional statutory reports required, indications are there may also be a further period of public consultation prior to this. When the committee meeting does happen, it will be at short notice and anyone who has submitted an objection will be invited to speak. Given there will only be a limited time slot allocated for this **if you want to speak, please contact wage-iw@email.com in the first instance so that we can co-ordinate our arguments against to ensure all key points are made.** We aim to hold a demonstration outside the council building immediately prior to the meeting.

# Environmental lawyers condemn application

**Leading environmental lawyers Richard Buxton have carefully examined Wight Building Material's (WBM) application and conclude that it contains numerous deficiencies and inconsistencies.**

Firstly, the physical extent of the proposed extraction site is not clear. WBM's application states that it is 29.3 hectares. However various supporting documents state the size as 14 hectares, others suggest that it may be as high as 33 hectares. This is highly relevant for several reasons. The Council's pre-screening application which determined whether a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is necessary was on the basis of 14 hectares, and concluded that no such assessment would be needed, and none has been provided. **However, at 29 hectares an EIA is automatically required.** Critically, the Landscape Impact Assessment currently relied on was prepared on the basis of a site of just 12 hectares, less than half the size of what is currently applied for. Furthermore, the AONB Screening Opinion was also on the basis of this much smaller site.

**Dust**  
Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) guidelines suggest that where dwellings are between 250 metres and one kilometre a detailed dust mitigation assessment would not be required. As detailed overleaf, there are numerous properties well **within** 250 metres, including the new approved housing development at Palmers Farm, with some houses at just 70 metres. The outline mitigations offered by WBM are completely deficient as a Dust Impact Risk Assessment under IAQM guidelines.

**Overprovision**  
Richard Buxton note that WBM's arguments that the site is crucial to a continued source of gravel for the Island is flawed and at odds with the Council's own analysis. They quote the Council's recent assessment report (Isle of Wight Council Local Aggregate Assessment 2021) which states:  
*Based on permitted reserves and allocated sites, the council has a sufficient provision of land-won sand and gravel to meet the figure adopted by the ([Island] core strategy) plan over its lifetime. There is a significant overprovision, primarily as*



*a result of permitted reserves. This over provision provides the council with their significant contingency from which to deal with any likely continuing increase in demand as has been recorded in the last two years.*  
Richard Buxton also note that the Crown Estate Marine Aggregates Capability and Portfolio 2020 report makes it clear that there are significant licenced marine sites just a few kilometres away and that Island requirements currently amount to no more than 3% of extractions from those sites "clearly, future needs can be met from existing sites and increased

*recycled and marine aggregates, for which there is currently unfulfilled capacity. The gravel and sand this quarry could provide is not required".*  
Other deficiencies relate to flood control (lack of any drainage strategy) and noise (unreliable methodology) Richard Buxton conclude that in addition to the legal deficiencies noted above "there is clearly no policy support for the application, the site is not required in terms of meeting supply demands and will cause significant nuisance to neighbouring residents with no effective mitigation set out."



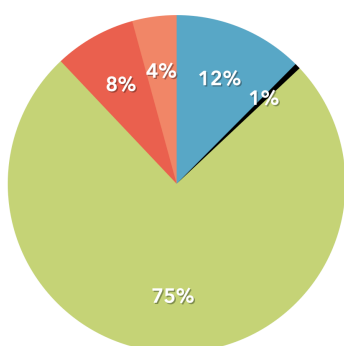
## Recycling is the answer!

But the question is why is the use of recycled aggregates by the Isle of Wight Council in decline? If the Council researched recycled sand and gravel, it would discover that it is totally unnecessary to destroy hectares of this Island's precious countryside. Andrew Liddle of Westridge Aggregates Ltd claims his company can produce over 50% of the Island's sand and gravel requirements through recycling and the Westridge site has, over the last four years, even recycles the water they use.

This site, the base of which is constructed using recycled material, of course, is ideally situated on the Briddlesford Road near Lyn Bottom Tip. Increasing the use of recycled aggregates would remove the need for circa 50 movements of 20 tonne HGVs along the totally unsuitable rural lanes of Wootton and Whippingham allowing, cyclists, walkers and horse riders to continue to enjoy this designated and beautiful route safely. All this and the recycled materials cost less. It should be a no brainer!

## What WAGE have been doing

- Printing £481.50
- Bank Charges £4.00
- Specialists Reports £2900.94
- Meeting Hall Fees £302.00
- Display Boards £164.16



How donations have been spent

Over the last year WAGE have been continuing to raise awareness of our concerns:

- Commissioned an independent transport report - you can read this on our website
- Issued press releases gaining local media coverage on the: Level of local objections/Extent of environmental impact/Concern over health risk to residents/ Independent transport report findings
- Ongoing email campaign to all IOW councillors.



**If you would like a replacement 'STOP GRAVEL EXTRACTION' board please email [wage-iw@email.com](mailto:wage-iw@email.com) we are asking for a donation of £2 per board to cover printing costs.**

Sort Code: 30-98-97 Bank Account No: 65813863  
Account Name: Wootton Against Gravel Extraction