From: [redacted]
To: Joanna Vincent
Subject: Ellenbrook field proposal
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Alex Moody -resident from [redacted]- speech on biodiversity .

Thank you for allowing me to speak regarding the Ellenbrook fields proposals and to provide direct observations of Natural History in the area since moving to Salisbury village in the spring this year 2024.

To facilitate some background, and give some understanding of my position, and my connection to the site specifically and the general area more broadly. I am the child of an engineer that was apprenticed at Astwick Manor (de Havilland?) during the 1970's and would frequently be invited to British aerospace Christmas events as the child of an employee until closure and redundancy for my father circa 1994.

I grew up on the edge of Panshanger and I was a frequent visitor to the woodlands and fields around Panshanger aerodrome, down to the river Mimram as a child and the historic relevance of Hatfield aerodrome is particularly relevant to myself through my Father . I think my interpretation of the period of British history that this airfield represents, should not be forgotten and that it was built on former farmland, which can be recaptured in a special way .

There is also a very real understanding in my interpretation of the history of the "Sandpit lane" area at the farthest peripheries of the Ellenbrook fields area . As a child ,I attended Verulam school in St .Albans which has a games field on Sandpit lane. I fully understand the significance of the area for extraction of sand and gravel since at least Roman times. With this in consideration perhaps Verulamium may never have been built or so significant had there not been the underground resources so prevalent in the local area.

I would like then to explain that I am bound by some biases to the area: but especially I feel I have a duty to write in defence of species that live in this area that have no means of defence of their own or would not even be observable without a unique window that occurred in the previous months as the dark mornings became ever later.

I have no financial incentive to protect any asset from devaluation because of the quarry so no accusations of nimbyism can be attributed,but I do have an interest to protect my step-son's mental health. As a child with distinct neurological challenges there is real tangible value of being in touch with nature with his direct experiences in that environment. From this Spring onwards I have shared many hours in the Ellenbrook field area and have seen a multitude of wildlife flourishing within a very distinct set of ecosystems . In particular it was noticeable with how many types and varieties of insects are to be found in this area. Perhaps this has some relevance to the abundance of grey willow (salix cinerea) which although it can be quite a prolific

species, even called a pest in countries like Australia, it is also very beneficial for insect populations. It is described by Wikipedia as providing "a great deal of nectar for pollinators". When we as a society support our insect populations our ecosystems thrive. Statistically there is a suggestion according to the Natural history museum that the populations of flying insects in the United Kingdom have declined by 60% in the last twenty years. Bees and hoverflies species according to United Kingdom government data have become less widespread by 42% since 1980. According to long running studies 80% of butterfly species in the United Kingdom have declined since 1970 whilst according to Gov.uk the pollinator indicator decreased by 24% from 1980 to 2022 and according to Gardensillustrated.com insect abundance is declining by 1-2% per year. Kent wildlife trust have suggested that insects sampled on vehicle number plates decreased by 78% between 2004-2023.

So why is this relevant to witnessing barn owls hunting in the Ellenbrook area? The answer is that barn owls do not exist in vacuum separated from the other species in their environments. Barn owls are prolific predators of small rodent species which in turn are predatory to insect populations. Suitable grassland and mixed meadows are ideal for both small rodents and for a very wide variety of small birds which are incredibly diverse in the Ellenbrook fields area. I have observed this for the previous spring, summer and autumn seasons. Before three weeks ago I had only ever seen a few barn owls in the natural environment. At first glance my initial thoughts on the first morning of observation,were what was that seagull doing almost hovering and why are the wings so rounded and as I watched I could clearly see- that it had the distinctive features of a **barn owl**. Yesterday and this morning I committed to an hour both days (before work) to try to gain photographic evidence and the only luck was that of hearing a hoot, I shall persist an attempt again tomorrow morning. Currently the barn owl population in the United kingdom is estimated to be around 9000 pairs and has been in decline since the 1800's and this is attributed to a number of factors including loss of nesting and roosting sites, loss of food sources, persecution and road traffic. With some factors that have been aiding barn owl populations being : volunteer efforts to erect nest boxes, protection from agricultural chemicals and creation of suitable hunting habitat which brings us directly back to the **site at Ellenbrook fields.** This is also a self sustaining carbon sink for the local area that fits neatly alongside efforts and subsidies **to promote rewilding**. Although I also fully understand the requirement by the County - for the need in construction of sand and gravel or concrete more broadly-this can be obtained elsewhere in East Hertfordshire – surely the unique eco-system in Ellenbrook fields sustaining these rare animals is more valuable, and special to residential Hatfield.

According to the world economic forum: global cement manufacturing is responsible for 8% of total carbon dioxide emissions. Although sand and gravel are only a constituent component of concrete, as our climate is impacted year on year, these important carbon sinks are going to become vital methods of defence in that struggle. In the longer term other solutions will be required to preserve our

ecological heritage.

The targets set out by the Paris agreement of November 2016 were negotiated by 196 parties at the 2015 United Nations climate change conference (near Paris, France) .They were ratified by at least 55 countries including the United Kingdom. These were the seal on negotiations which took three stages: the secured agreements of December 2015 as a precursor to ratification and further signing of agreements in April 2016 (at a signing ceremony in New York), and then finally ratifications of the agreement to trying to limit climate change on November 17 2016, in France .

There is also a significant historic relevance for this area from 1940's British history that we should not be willing to forget as a positional rallying cry for our British values and determinations to protect the natural environment and what we believe to be a true and just, and hold onto critical values to protect our wildlife , with clear direction and positional standing on the global stage.

As a child playing within the bomb hole in the woods around "Moneyhole playing fields" near Panshanger ? - it was very obvious to me , that what that piece of woodland and the de Havilland airfield served to protect, was both the stately home of the Gascoyne-Cecil family and the critical infrastructure of the UK. So from our World War II footing both here in Hatfield and at the Fryth in old Welwyn, which facilitated some of the highly critical inspirational actions by the French resistance cells- can we protect our invaluable wildlife eco-systems on Ellenbrook fields? .

The historic relevance of Hatfield and global conflict are notable by the first ever trial of a tank in the World War I period, accredited to this small town. Hatfield-Herts.co.uk suggest that as many as 5599 aircraft were built in Hatfield during World war II. Another 1505 aircraft were repaired by the Hatfeld- based de Havilland engineers .

The use of Ellenbrook fields in recent years for such cinematic epics as "Saving private Ryan" and the less known "Band of brothers" have aided immortalising the area through cinematic creation in the public consciousness if only indirectly. We can preserve this educational history too for our children within Ellenbrook Country Park, provided we keep it as a park.

Whilst again I mention consideration for the barn owls observed in the site in question, I would like to make note of the devastating impact on the local water table that we are still recovering from (explain ?) regarding the spillage at Sleapshyde farm ?? Our local water, is no longer allowed to be drinking water for human consumption.This is due to contamination (although I only know this through second hand wat7er utility information relevant to working as a subcontractor for Affinity water.

Our local water is therefore now imported from Grafham water (51 miles form Hatfield, near Huntingdon) although I know little more about this . Still there are

observable areas of the Ellenbrook stream with water life . Although parts have received some modification on the J Day stoneworks land, which i believe the environment agency were made aware of many years ago. There are additional obstacles in the water course to create a suitable banking with beautiful examples of thriving aquatic ecosystems that would be directly impacted if there are any actions takenin quarrying that cause none mitigatable damage to the Ellenbrook stream.

The Ellenbrook stream running through the Ellenbrook fields area is already subject to modification.It has a predominantly straight course through the Ellenbrook fields area but with a very specific type of chalk stream in the local area there are suitable possibilities of a unique ecosystem, not present in Rivers such as the Colne, Mimram, Lea or Ver which are all much larger rivers. The Ellenbrook presents opportunities for insects to thrive with the section of the Ellenbrook at J Day having damsel and dragonflies thriving in that section. I have not seen minnows swimming in the section of the Ellenbrook fields but I have seen minnows in the Ellenbrook downstream on the other side of St Albans road as the brook passes by the roadside. The stream and the meadow are very broad mechanisms within a total ecosystem. Wth any component removed it would not fully sustain the same result.

In Britain since the removal of wolves, beavers and boar along with many other historic natural species, our environment has attempted to adapt but with the overrunning of deer in many woodland areas, the possibilities for saplings (and photosynthesis) have been restricted. With the loss of beaver populations, we are losing our floodplains that were a resistant defence against global warming and prevented excessive water run off.

The loss of this park and quarrying risk to our current water sources also impacts water extraction costs and increase energy consumption to produce clean water. This then may impact our national and local ESG (environment, social, governance) scores which are increasingly important to investors, who consider them a critical factor in the business decision making process in the area.

We require homes and infrastructure to support our populations but we also must ensure there are the conditions in place to preserve our ecological footprint that also sustain our future . So we must act as responsible custodians of the land that we have as our habitats as well as the habitats of other species. Please reject this quarry .