

Andrew Lewin MP

Statement to Ellenbrook Inquiry – 19.11.24

As both the Labour Member of Parliament for Welwyn Hatfield and a local resident, it is a privilege to be among the first to give evidence to this inquiry. Business in the House of Commons is about to start for the day, but this is the only place I wanted to be this morning.

I know how important this issue is for so many local residents in Ellenbrook, Salisbury Village and across Hatfield.

I want to start by thanking the community groups who have been seeking to protect Ellenbrook Fields over so many years. You won the political argument against the quarry and made your case successfully to the previous Planning Inspector.

Only two years ago, that Inspector provided a clear judgement, which I paraphrase below:

“The scheme would be inappropriate development, which is by definition harmful to the Green Belt.

I consider that the harm to the Green Belt, along with the harm to the character, appearance and amenity of the area, and to pedestrian safety, is not clearly outweighed by the benefits of aggregate extraction.”

It's my conviction that this should have been the moment when this question was resolved.

With the proposal from Brett Aggregates rejected by the community and the Planning Inspectorate, Hertfordshire County Council had one final responsibility – to remove the Ellenbrook site from their Minerals Plan. They failed to do so.

We are debating a renewed application for a quarry today, because of the failure of Conservative run Hertfordshire County Council to draw a line under this issue when they had the opportunity to do so.

Prior to my election and since becoming our Labour MP in July this year, I urged Hertfordshire County Council to remove Ellenbrook from the Minerals Plan for the county. If that decision had been taken, I think it is extremely unlikely that Brett Aggregates would have any cause to appeal again. The failure to act meant, that Brett were emboldened to bring their case forward.

I believe the failure to remove Ellenbrook from the Minerals Plan is the single biggest reason we are back here today. It was a choice made by this local Conservative administration and one they alone are accountable for.

The case to reject a quarry and maintain Ellenbrook Fields as a green oasis for Hatfield is as strong today as it was when the last judgement was made in 2022.

I welcome the fact that residents and representatives from community groups will be providing detailed evidence in the days to come. I don't intend to pre-empt the case they will make, so will briefly summarise some of the arguments I believe to be most powerful.

1. The proposed site for the quarry is in the green belt and the scale and varied habitats of Ellenbrook Country Park, make it a rare corridor and resource for wildlife in Hatfield. In 2022, the previous inspector was clear that a quarry would cause major harm to the Green Belt, “not outweighed by the benefits of aggregate extraction.” I believe that is still the case.
2. The original Section 106 Agreement agreed in 2001 set out requirements for Ellenbrook Fields to be leased to a Trust and managed in the public interest as a Country Park. This legal agreement has never been honoured in full.

I have a petition calling for this agreement to be honoured and Ellenbrook Park Country Trust to be created. As of yesterday, this had the support of 527 local people and I will be submitting it to this Inquiry.

3. The proposed quarry will be situated near to the known bromate contamination of public and private groundwater supplies.
I would encourage the Inspector to consult with the Environment Agency and look to the precautionary principle. In short, that it cannot be right to approve any proposal for a quarry that has a credible risk of damaging our local water supply.

Quarrying has taken place in and around Hatfield for nearly 100 years. We have made a significant contribution to meeting national demand for sand and gravel.

The objections to a quarry at Ellenbrook to are not because people in our town do not want to play our part in a national effort. It is because there is a compelling case to protect the green belt, guard against water contamination and create Ellenbrook Country Park as a destination for local people.

The Conservatives who run Hertfordshire County Council have formally “withdrawn their reasons for objection” to this proposal, but as the Labour MP for Welwyn Hatfield I am here to stand up for our community.

I commend everyone who is coming forward to provide evidence and hope that we can secure the right outcome: A green future for Ellenbrook Fields.

Andrew Lewin MP – Petition to Save Ellenbrook Fields

Why this petition matters

Ellenbrook Fields is a green oasis in Hatfield. It is a site that we want to see remain as a country park, not turned into a quarry.

The landowner seeks approval to operate a quarry for 40 years, but has failed to address key questions on public health, pollution and the long-term impact on Hatfield.

Shockingly, the Conservative run Hertfordshire County Council has withdrawn their reasons for opposing the application.

As your Labour Member of Parliament and Labour Borough Councillors, we continue to oppose the application.

Sign our petition to ARC - insist they honour their promise and establish the Ellenbrook Country Park Trust, so local residents have some power over the future of the site and we can protect as much green space as possible.

Andrew Lewin MP

<https://survey.labour.org.uk/ellenbrookfields>

Signatories: **532**

1	Conor Yapp
2	Phil Blanc
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5	Colin Brown
6	Balint Domonkos
7	Julia Palmer
8	Lucas Palmer
9	Georgie Murray
10	Matt Kortekaas
11	Lynn Beades
12	Courtney D'Souza
13	Sarah Reynolds
14	Natalie Kortekaas
15	Michael Garman
16	David Sweet
17	Maisy Buckingham
18	Heidi Lewis
19	Stephen Gibson
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41	Annamaria Di Stefano
42	Graeme Balding
43	Catherine Skinner
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47	Sarah Jones
48	Patrick Lawrie
49	Fiona Dale
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52	Sarah Lieberman
53	Owen Gallagher
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55	Susan Blackburn
56	Robert Dean
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59	JOHN HAWTHORNE
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64	Helen Callegari
65	Carolyn Crawshaw
66	Anne Waldron

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69	Dee Illingworth
70	Mandy Rogan
71	Michael Crawshaw
72	Robyn Pewsey-Smith
73	Paul Blessing
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75	Sophie Stephens
76	Rosie Clewlow
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78	Matthew Timmis
79	Maureen Ward
80	Caroline Rossington
81	Romoun Phillips
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83	Caroline Churchill
84	Nicky Rogowski
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88	Sarah Endersby
89	Christopher Thomas
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94	Andrew Hedges
95	Emma Hedges
96	Vicki Laing
97	Jennifer Hedges
98	Dave Railston
99	Adam Cann
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102	Sharon Harridance
103	James Stancombe
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119	Michael Garman
120	Hazel Martin
121	Rebecca Tagg
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125	Vicki Blanden
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135	Daniel Ward
136	Claire Kennedy
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148	Philippa Davis
149	Yvette Rawle
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153	Dhilum Alacon
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155	Graham Smith
156	Dharmisha Stezaly
157	Jean Cox
158	Sharon Astley

159	Sally Bull
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161	john Garside-Neville
162	Sarah Butler-Tuffery
163	Dorothy Lackenby
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165	Jack Price
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167	Katie Brand
168	Rishi Kotecha
169	Gail Bishop
170	Amanda Newton
171	Christabel Tan
172	Russell Sleat
173	Sharon Loughlin
174	Jonathan Seaton
175	Layla Kaye
176	Bernadette Reynolds
177	Melanie Weinstein
178	Korin Warner
179	Lorraine Fox
180	Neville Fox
181	Tommas Simmons
182	Clare Simmons
183	Nicola Jones
184	Alison Meaden
185	Isobel Hamer
186	Martin Worman
187	Philippa Butler
188	Nicholas Koliardos
189	Samantha Koliardos
190	Anna Harriet Northcroft
191	Zeynep Yildiz
192	Cathy Watson
193	Neville Fox
194	Paul Smith
195	Alan Folkard
196	Alan Waksberg
197	Imogen Gent
198	Charles Simpson
199	(only email address provided)
200	Anna Reynolds
201	Joanna Scott
202	Jo Crouch
203	Ruby Wong
204	James Scott

205	Lee Knowles
206	jeff lee
207	Jon Gendle
208	Wenda Wu
209	poppy mills
210	Scott Willmott
211	Wendy Turner
212	Paul Hibbert
213	Daniel Loftus
214	Jamie Loftus
215	Chris Loftus
216	Gerard Loftus
217	Karl Henrich
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222	Alan Waksberg
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224	Julie Weaver
225	Sarah Martin
226	Nina Sue
227	Francesca Fazey
228	Michael Reynolds
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243	Kate Coleman
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250	Carole Evans

251	Kirsti Henrich
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254	Loraine Rich
255	Renata Dunkley
256	Benson Fung
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259	Nathan Pycio
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262	Neo Pedrithes
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273	Kelly Weal
274	Jessica Chapple
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276	Matt Chu
277	Lex Cameron
278	Charlotte Darrell
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295	Lucy Iwasyk
296	Emily Jackson

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300	Shabnam Singh
301	Kieran Weal
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317	Tanya Hendricks
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319	Neeraj Hooda
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324	Paul Dutnall
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337	Kate Atkins
338	Lily Thompson
339	Karen Whitford
340	Andrew Whitford
341	Daisy Rabb
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364	David Kaloczi
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454	Jim Huckle
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461	Jane Perrott
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467	David Wheeler
468	Martin Davidson
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470	Maria Gray
471	Matthew Myers
472	Nicola Brown
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475	Susan Conway
476	Mohammad Naeem Khan
477	Sheila Smith
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479	Andrew Mills
480	Cliff Meader

481	Alex Raine
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483	Philippa Butler
484	Tabitha Pawar
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486	Ernest Wright
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488	Kayleigh Wesley
489	Kelly Ferguson
490	Christos Pedrithes
491	Jane Skeates
492	Julie Inglis
493	Andy Chaplin
494	Patricia Gill
495	Shawn Franklin
496	Helen Walecka
497	Rachel Pedrithes
498	Michael Ajoodan-Poor
499	Chantal Salvatore
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501	Lanre Animashaun
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503	Karina Raine
504	Graham Lewis
505	Lisa O'Leary
506	Supriya Khedekar
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510	Victoria Jackson
511	Hannah west
512	Bahram Ajoodanpoor
513	Joe Goldman
514	Emily Primrose-Brown
515	Matthew Jarrett
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517	Elena Cozma
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520	John Meeke
521	John Spavins
522	Daniel Morris
523	Paige Green
524	Pamela Mahoney
525	Julie Bullen
526	Marianna Theofanous

527	Samantha Koliardos
528	Kanta Rodrigues
529	Mimi Kidd
530	Rosie Willett
531	mark bailey
532	Richard Morgan