

Dear Mr Middleton

Thank you for the opportunity to make a statement to your Inquiry.

We moved to Oaklands Lane, Smallford, on the western boundary of Ellenbrook Fields, over 40 years ago and have regularly used the local footpaths, including Ellenbrook from the time that DeHavilland's closed.

So, it will come as no surprise that my wife and I are totally against the proposed development of this wonderful wildlife area to be used for gravel extraction.

Your Visit to the Site

You have said that you will be visiting the site unaccompanied on Monday 17th November and I hope that you find the following suggestions helpful.

1. If you're driving there, the best place to park is Notcutt's Garden Centre in Smallford. There are no other formal parking facilities.

To enter Ellenbrook Fields from here, walk around the front of Notcutt's and keep to your left; you'll find a narrow footpath that leads there.

Before you do so, I would encourage you to walk eastwards along the A1057, Hatfield Road, that runs alongside Ellenbrook Fields from Smallford to Ellenbrook.

- 1.1. This road is a major artery into and out of St Albans – from/to Hatfield, Welwyn Garden City, the A1(M), etc. It carries a lot of traffic throughout the day. If Brett wins the appeal, this busy, narrow road will be used by the lorries and other traffic entering and leaving the site.
- 1.2. You will see –
 - how narrow the road is
 - how narrow the pavement is
 - how dangerous it already is for pedestrians and cyclists.

It has been suggested that there will be more than 150 lorry movements each day!

The road is obviously totally unsuitable for this number of expected lorry movements – especially recognising that, as they are required to travel westwards towards the entrance, they will have to turn right into the site: *creating 'bedlam'* comes to mind!

- 1.3. You will pass, and be able to enter, Popefield Farm (to your left) and see the beautiful, Elizabethan house and outbuildings now occupied by 4 families and one business – and will be able to imagine the impact of gravel pits operating so close! It will be an absolute nightmare for them!
- 1.4. Further along the A157, you will arrive at the edge of the Ellenbrook Estate and notice the houses facing Ellenbrook Fields – and their obvious susceptibility to noise, air and dust pollution.

2. If you enter The Fields at the Ellenbrook End, you will see –
- 2.1. The University of Hertfordshire (UH), DeHavilland Site, to your right. This is probably used by at least a thousand staff, students and visitors each day: all would be highly susceptible to any air pollution resulting from the extraction of gravel.
 - 2.2. The UH Sports Field within Ellenbrook Fields; This is used throughout the year by students and staff plus many visiting individuals and teams - of all ages, including juniors.

People using The Sports Field will be particularly vulnerable/susceptible to air and dust pollution created by the extraction of gravel; should this contain silicates, that are known to be carcinogenic, I hate to think what the consequences might be, including the implications of any associated court actions.

- 2.3. You will see evidence –
- That the water table is quite high, especially if it is, or has been raining – you will see lots of quite large puddles and lots of muddy areas.

What are the implications of quarrying an area with such a high water table and what is likely to be the subsequent effects on the movement of the aquifer and its associated Bromate Plume – which is highly carcinogenic? Another major concern.

- Of how well used the site is – notice how well-trodden the grassed footpaths are, even though there –
 - has never been any formal marketing and/or publicity inviting people to visit
 - are limited facilities for people using it – simply footpaths and about four benches.
- Of the previous industrial use of the site by DeHavilland's which might prove to be of some historical interest in the future.

Another Concern: What may not be obvious

CEMEX/TARMAC have been quarrying in the area for many years – their entrance is on Oaklands Lane and their site runs along the north of Ellenbrook Fields and beyond.

They decided not to put in a Planning Application to quarry from Ellenbrook Fields, even though they have the infrastructure required. We believe that the reason they are not interested in quarrying the site is they consider the quality of the gravel to be too poor.

If this is the case, what are the implications for Brett? If this site turns out to be financially unsound, how will they react? Will they set up a Company specifically to extract the gravel on this site and, if it turns out to be unviable, will they simply *pick up their forks and leave*? If this happens, who will be left to pick up the pieces? The local authorities, perhaps the Ellenbrook Country Park Trust?

Should you approve the Application

1. This will result in the loss of a well-used and much-loved facility for the local community. For many of us, this will not be a temporary loss – 30+ years will definitely not be temporary for me and my wife!

2. We would ask you to include the following in your judgement –

2.1. That there should be a 'No Lorries Parking Zone', within 1-2 miles from the entrance, for lorries using the site and this should be enforced by heavy fines.

We are concerned that lorries that arrive early, before the gates open, will park, possibly on the Ellenbrook Estate opposite the Fields – even though there are double-yellow lines there.

2.2. Once gravel has been removed, Brett should pay several million pounds into the Ellenbrook Country Park Trust in recognition of the loss of amenity to the local community over 30 years gravelling.

2.3. As part of reinstating the site, the following should be provided –

- a car park for at least 40 vehicles together with toilet facilities
- dog-poo and litter bins
- drinking fountains
- at least a dozen benches around the site

2.4. In their application, Brett stated that the site will be worked area by area. The public footpaths and bridleways should therefore be kept open – and, where necessary, be re-routed.

2.5. Adequate arrangements should be made, throughout the term of the extraction, for the continuance of the drainage serving Popefield Farm - permission for a drain to a stream was granted a few years ago in compliance with terms laid out by the Environment Agency and it is not clear how the stream will continue during excavation.

2.6. The preparation for any health & safety measures should acknowledge and include –

- the presence of a 4' Gas Main traversing the western boundary
- acknowledging that the former DeHavilland's site was a target for German Bombers during WW2 - the possibility of live ordnance being discovered and how this will be dealt with, especially if found within close proximity of the Gas Pipe and of such sensitivity that it could require an explosion on site.

2.7. With respect to the gas pipeline, to ensure safety, Brett must consult with Centrica on all matters relating to the movement of soil and traffic close to the pipeline - considering matters such as the proximity of structures and traffic, the strength of the track carrying the traffic, the effect of vibrations (caused by lorry movements...), etc.

2.8. Before work begins on the site, you should set out clear and enforceable conditions relating to any incoming materials used for back filling the excavations and surface restoration to ensure that, area by area, the Ellenbrook Country Park is in part kept open to the public and that restored areas regain their Park status as soon as possible.

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- 2.9. We understand that the aquifer, noise and dust will be continually monitored: this monitoring should be undertaken by an independent appointed organisation and the readings be displayed and made publicly available daily.
- 2.10. Should the 30-year term be over-run, a penalty should become due; such penalty to be calculated in such manner as to be a realistic sum, to take full account of inflation etc. if and when it becomes due.

November 2024

Helen and Jeff Ruane-Lewis