



Delivering Quality Services to  
Coxhoe & Quarrington Hill

## Coxhoe Parish Council

<b>Meeting</b>	Special
<b>Date</b>	Tuesday 15 <sup>th</sup> September 2009
<b>Time</b>	4.00pm
<b>Venue</b>	Village Hall, Coxhoe

### **Minutes of the proceedings of the Special Coxhoe Parish Council meeting held at 4.00pm in the Village Hall, Front Street, Coxhoe, on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2009.**

**Present:** Councillor S. Dunn (in the Chair) and  
**Councillors:** K. Pounder, D. Smith and J. Taylor.  
**Clerk:** Mrs. M. Forster

**09.139 Apologies:** Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P. Dodsworth, Mrs. B. Hepplewhite and Mrs. C. Wigham.

**09.140 Members' Declarations of Interest:** Councillor S. Dunn had previously declared an interest in the Planning Application by Tarmac for Cold Knuckles Quarry. He remained in the meeting as the purpose of the meeting was to merely report information back to the next Ordinary Council meeting and no decisions would be made at this meeting.

**09.141 Planning Applications by Tarmac Ltd. for Cold Knuckles Quarry:** The Chairman thanked Claire Teasdale (Planning Officer from Durham County Council), Michael Young (Estates Manager from Tarmac Ltd.), Brendan Kelly (Estates Officer from Tarmac Ltd.) and Audrey Christie (Senior Public Rights of Way Officer from Durham County Council) for attending the meeting.

Michael Young advised that Old Quarrington Quarry had been in existence since the turn of the century with a number of different planning permissions on the site including for limestone, sand, coal, and landfill (inert material, not household domestic waste). The Environment Act required a periodic review of such planning permissions – a ROMP (Review of Mineral Applications). Several elements required planning permission as Tarmac wanted to dig out and restore more of Cold Knuckles Quarry than they currently had planning permission for. They wanted to take 1m tonnes of permean sand (which was rounded soft sand mainly used for mortar / bricklaying) away. They had consent for landfill but wanted to extend the time constraint. There would be fifteen years development before the next planning review and preparation of an environmental statement.

Mr. Young then submitted a flythrough digital presentation showing Tarmac's plans for the whole site, with representations of what the site would look like from various viewpoints at the five phases of the plans over the next fifteen years. The plans showed areas where planning consent currently existed and where consents were being applied for to join up small gaps so that the whole area could be restored. He gave a brief history of the site and its ownership. He advised that Tarmac considered that, due to excavation works over many previous years, the current footpath at the top of the site was now unsafe and so it had been fenced in on both sides. It was proposed to close that temporarily (for a period of 10 to 15 years) and re-establish a footpath at the proposed new face behind the current area. He advised that it was planned to preserve the nature reserve to tie in with the limestone landscape project. Work would be undertaken in the five phases from East to West with each area being restored at the back and the face (new slope) being realigned to prevent visual impact. In phase 1 for example, the limestone would be removed from the top, stored behind, the sand would be removed, and then both parts would be restored before the next phase was moved to. The top footpath would not be able to be used from the commencement of phase 1 but Tarmac would assist in ensuring that the footpath at the bottom was used. There had always been gates on the fence but Tarmac would want a bridleway to be made available.

A Councillor asked for clarification that the bridleway would be a short term measure due to the closure of the footpath. Mr. Young replied that people had expressed concern that the great views from the top footpath would be lost but he advised that it would not be possible to get along that footpath in a year's time anyway as Tarmac considered that it would collapse if no works were

undertaken to remedy the situation. Mrs. Christie advised that the lifespan of the footpath was unknown. The County Council had tried to measure movement and there had not been anything noticeable in 9 months but it was accepted that this was on a causeway between two quarries and had large cracks in it. She added that by the commencement of phase 1, the route below to the South would have acquired public rights over it as it appeared that it had been used for 19 of the 20 years required by law. After phase 5, the land would be recreated so that in 15 year's time there would be two rights of way protected for the public for ever. The horse riders did not have that certainty at the moment. The legislation did not allow a path to be diverted onto a public right of way so there would need to be another route by legal agreement between the County Council and Tarmac. Mr. Young stated that Tarmac wanted there to be beneficial public access and that Tarmac had bought certain parts of the land to ensure this.

Claire Teasdale commented that the public rights of way issue was at the forefront of the responses to the public consultation undertaken on the planning applications. Mr. Young advised that in 15 years' time Tarmac proposed to widen the path to 3m and provide a better useable surface with a fence either side. He stated that the other end was very steep and rutted in the top corner but that would be done at the start. Tarmac were happy to enter into a Trek Scheme where riders wearing bands would be allowed to temporarily ride around the area and this would be in existence as long as the nature reserve bridleways were not expanded. They could tie this in with the existing section to open up the bridleways already in existence at the site. Mrs. Christie stated that that would be welcomed. Mr. Young answered questions from Elected Members, advising that it was proposed to guide the users away from the road and that Tarmac would be happy to have the road signs moved for the horse riders. The consensus of the meeting was that this provided a very positive outcome, with the residents of Quarrington Hill having a better bridleway and footpath network over time.

Mr. Young went on to state that due to the new link road, there should not be a traffic problem; that Tarmac carried out biodiversity monitoring and more than the required environmental monitoring of noise, dust, and vibration, etc.; and that noise and dust would be kept to a minimum. Mrs. Teasdale expanded that the new planning permission would require blast and dust monitoring and that Tarmac had always responded quickly to any issues that Durham County Council had raised with them at monitoring visits. Mr. Young added that Tarmac were ISO accredited and that it was important to the company to minimise their impact and to create biodiversity. The company had regular liaison meetings with residents for two way feedback. A Councillor advised that he had attended such meetings as a resident and was encouraged by what he had seen and considered that Tarmac were conscientious. Mr. Young added that whilst approval of the applications would not create jobs, it would ensure longevity of existing jobs.

Mrs. Teasdale advised that the County Council had undertaken consultation on four planning applications. These were the ROMP application where planning permissions existed but a new schedule of conditions would be agreed; the second application was for the extraction of Cold Knuckles; the third for where the application did not comply with the condition which would extend the time limit period of the old permission to tie in with the fifteen years; and the proposed re-establishment of cycling which had planning permission but was time limited and so an application had been submitted. Statutory consultees had included the Environment Agency, Natural England and utilities companies and the County Council had looked at the visual impact and ecology. Members of the Planning Committee would be provided with all information including residents' comments and the views of the community when the County Council considered the applications. Further information had been requested from the company and Tarmac had agreed an extension of time to the end of December for the four applications to be determined together. It was hoped that this would happen earlier but this allowed time for the Parish Council to comment on the applications if they wished to do so.

The Chair summed up by saying that the quarry was in existence and had a long standing approval so the community had to live with it but there was a need for everyone to minimise the impact and ensure that there was something better in the long term than the community had now. Members commended Tarmac on their public consultation, their actions as a result of the residents' liaison meetings and involvement in enhancements to Crowtrees Nature Reserve. Mrs. Christie added that she was reassured by the meeting and would submit such comments in writing to the Planning Office.

**Recommended** That the minutes of the meeting be submitted to the next Ordinary Council meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2009 in order that a decision may be made as to whether the Parish Council wished to comment on the planning applications by Tarmac Ltd. for Cold Knuckles Quarry.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and Michael Young, Brendan Kelly and Audrey Christie left the meeting. Mark Stouph entered the meeting.

**09.142 Premier Waste Joint Stocks Waste Disposal Site:** The Chairman thanked Claire Teasdale (Planning Officer from Durham County Council) and Mark Stouph (Director of Risk Management from Premier Waste) for attending the meeting.

Mr. Stouph advised that he would present details of current developments on the site and future proposals. The Chair stated that the Council wished to know mainly about the restoration of the site and what was in the planning approval for such, particularly as what may have been appropriate at the time that the approval was granted may no longer be considered such in view of the time that had elapsed. Mr. Stouph showed a plan of the site and detailed which areas were used for waste. He advised that phase 1 of the site was coming to a close following many years of operation. Progressive restoration had been carried out in this area and it was anticipated that that would be complete by the end of the year. Mrs. Teasdale advised that the planning permission was for the land to be restored to agricultural, grass land, shrub planting and a footpath link across the site close to the Southern boundary. A Member asked whether the land would be farmed and Mr. Stouph replied that there could be general grazing and it was normally sheep, not heavy cattle, when such sites were restored. This was a limestone area so the grass would have to blend in with the environment.

The Chair asked whether the site went as far as the Quarrington Hill former colliery site. Mr. Stouph replied that Premier Waste leased the land up to the nature reserve. A Member asked about a new entrance as he understood that the present one was to be discontinued. Mr. Stouph advised that an application was to be submitted in the next few weeks and explained on the plan where the access would be moved to. Members commented that this was further away from the village and that it would slow traffic on a steep dangerous hill.

Mr. Stouph advised that Premier Waste would be moving into the compound that had recently been agreed. Phase 2 would be developed in a cell format. The cells would have a clear lining and waste would be put into each cell individually. There needed to be a gentle slope to the cells so traffic would come from the top of the site to the cells. If the application was successful, then construction should commence the following year. That part of the site would be in use for fifteen years. The initiative to divert waste landfill meant that waste to landfill was reducing which could extend the time. Quarterly monitoring was undertaken, with a submission to the Environment Agency including a return on the life of the site. The latest return had specified fifteen years. As progress was made with the next set of cells, they would be capped off and restored as the company progressed around the site. With regard to moving aggregates out of the site, planning permission had been granted for a site at Tursdale and aggregates were being moved to there over the next six months so this should reduce the traffic at this site by 30% after that. Other developments in the long term included all land fill gas being collected and generated into electricity. At some point, a leachate treatment plant of similar size to the gas plant would be installed. This would enable the liquid (that occurred as waste breaks down) to be collected in the cells and to be extracted, treated and disposed of. The extraction pipes and the treatment units would all be sealed to avoid any smell nuisance.

The Chair sought clarification that as each of the seven cell phases were completed, the plan was for restoration to magnesium limestone grass, as with phase 1. Mr. Stouph replied that this was the case and Mrs. Teasdale added that the planning application for that had been agreed in 2000 and the company had had to reaffirm their proposals for restoration and had advised that they wanted to go with their original scheme. The company were taking some material out where the clays had been whereas they used to line the cells so there was no need to import onto the site so if that had implications on the restoration then they may need to adjust their plan accordingly for that area.

Mr. Stouph stated that when the site came to closure, this would be discussed with the residents' liaison group and suggestions for community use could be sought and incorporated if possible. He gave the example of a site at Birtley where the views of residents had resulted in footpaths and cycle

paths being introduced. The Chair stated that such discussions would be welcome. There was a need to start looking at possibilities for the community now to ensure that they were taken into consideration in the planning of the restoration. The site had had a significant effect on residents for decades and may have for another two decades and it would be good to see other possibilities for the site that would benefit the community and compensate them for the effect over that period and be welcomed by future generations. He added that the company should have some ideas from the work that they carried out all over the country and that there was a need to be more creative than the suggestion of grassland.

Mrs. Teasdale added that any changes to the approved restoration for grassland would have to be submitted from Premier Waste to Durham County Council as an application for consideration. She advised that it may be beneficial to appoint a representative of the Parish Council to attend the liaison meetings. A Member stated that he already attended such meetings as a resident and would be happy to be appointed as the Council representative and feed information both ways. He added that residents were keen to see a car park for the nature reserve. Mr. Stouph responded that Premier Waste had spoken to the County Council in connection with the limestone links and approval had been granted for the use of a footpath and for a cycleway to be constructed. Premier would not have a problem with a car park but that would be subject to planning permission. There would also not be a problem with extending the cycle routes from Coxhoe to Kelloe to make a circular route.

The Chair asked whether there was any potential for planting of the site. Mrs. Teasdale replied that this would not be common in the area but the planning staff could liaise with landscape advisers if the company approached them with such proposals. There had been a big issue with the need for magnesium limestone grass in the past, this was typical of the area, and there were targets to increase the amounts. Mr. Stouph gave examples of work undertaken with the community during the time that Premier had been on site and reiterated that Premier Waste were happy to discuss any suggestions put forward at the liaison meetings with the residents and the County Council and come up with a solution that all parties were happy with. Mrs. Teasdale added that the area was being restored with a particular aim in mind and ground preparations were being done for that now. With regard to other ideas such as tree planting, each site was considered on its own merits. Again it would be for the company to submit an appropriate application. The amended access may result in the need for further revision to the restoration application which would provide a further opportunity for the Parish Council to offer its views, as well as the suggestion of having a representative on the quarry residents' liaison group.

It was considered by various parties at the meeting that Premier Waste improved matters as a result of the liaison meetings. Examples were provided and Mr. Stouph added that the number of complaints had reduced as a result of the initiatives introduced. He provided copies of the environment report for the previous year and the company's magazine which included details of the work undertaken at the Birtley site that had been referred to. He ended by stating that he would ensure that the outline for the restoration scheme as it presently stood was available at the next residents' liaison meeting in order that discussions may take place as to other options and ideas people may have.

**Recommended** That the minutes of the meeting be submitted to the next Ordinary Council meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2009 for further discussion and to decide whether the Parish Council wished to appoint a representative to attend future quarry residents' liaison meetings.

The meeting closed at 6.05 p.m.

***Signed as a true record of the meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2009:***

**Cllr. P. Dodsworth (Chairman) Cllr. S. Dunn (Vice Chairman) Mrs. M. Forster (Clerk)**