

Politicians enlisted in gravel fight

Campaigners vow to end work

by Beth Wyatt

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Politicians are joining campaigners in the fight against more gravel extraction in Aldborough Hatch.

Lee Scott, Conservative MP for Ilford North, and Cllr Paul Canal, leader of the Conservative group on Redbridge Council, have met residents opposing plans by Brett Lafarge to extract 900,000 tonnes of gravel and sand at Aldborough Hatch Farm.

'Determination'

There are worries that the work could have a detrimental effect on 151-year-old St Peter's Church in Aldborough Road North.

Mr Scott said: "The residents are saying enough is enough. I have concerns about the proximity to the church and I will gladly lend my support to them."

Members of the Aldborough Hatch Defence Association, run by Ron Jeffries, met last week and agreed to fight the proposals.

Gravel extraction has gone on in Aldborough Hatch for more than 50 years.

Mr Scott said: "I have known Ron for a long while.

"I think he's a great campaigner and if anyone can

deliver, it is Ron and his group." Campaigners are concerned about Brett Lafarge's intention to work 100m from the church plans to close Bridleway 93 for a minimum of two years.

Mr Jeffries, 81, of Spearpoint Gardens, said: "Let no one be under any illusion, we

means at our disposal to bring gravel workings to an end in this much-loved area of green belt. Any further erosion of our quality of life in this part of the borough will be resisted with determination."

Autumn

Cllr Wes Streeting, deputy leader of Redbridge Council and Labour member for Aldborough, said he shared residents' concerns and would be meeting Brett Lafarge and council officers this month.

Simon Treacy, Brett Lafarge's estates manager, said there had been "some delays" to the programme, which the company consulted residents about in 2011, but that it is ready to submit a planning application in the autumn.

He added: "Once our plans and proposals are finalised, we will distribute information across the local community, which will also be made available via our website."