

LETTERS AND COMMENT

GRAVEL EXTRACTION

Workings a real danger to church

Rev Kate Lovesey, Priest-in-Charge, St Peter's Aldborough Hatch, writes:

I am saddened that Brett Tarmac has chosen a venue for the consultation exhibition outside the area affected, but it is not the real issue.

First, I am very concerned for the local community and the dust so close to houses and children in Aldborough Hatch.

Secondly, I am the vicar of the 153-year-old and very beautiful St Peter's Church which is built on mud with no foundations to speak of. It was how they built in them those days.

It looks solid but it is a brick building with a stone facing. There is a very real danger of sinkage and cracking as the ground and gravel moves under it. It had to have major work with tie bars inside some years ago because the walls were moving – most likely due to the change in the water table then because of the gravel works further away.

We have asked Brett Tarmac to give us assurances of future care and repairs to the church. They have refused my offer of the use of the St Peter's Church halls free of charge over a weekend, preferring to deny access to this for a lot of our older residents and putting information up on the internet when so many do not have access to it.

Exhibition venue shows contempt

Mr and Mrs Laws, Billet Road, Chadwell Heath, write:

I would like to express my concerns to Brett Tarmac at the choice of venue, date and timings for the community consultation.

Both their "preferred" choice of Fairlop Waters and the selected venue of Redbridge Football Club are some distance to travel for the local community who will be affected by your proposals.

The more central venue of St Peter's Church is far more accessible to all. Churches always tend to be! As well as being far more central to the proposed sand



■ St Peter's Church Aldborough Hatch was built on mud and vicar Rev Kate Lovesey says nearby gravel workings will endanger it

and gravel workings.

I note Brett Tarmac state that they chose the football club because it's large enough to cater for up to 150 people. St Peter's Church halls can comfortably cope with that number so the size of the venue is not the issue. Perhaps it's that both the football club and Fairlop Waters have bars? Otherwise I can only surmise that it is to make it as "un-community" friendly as possible.

They have selected Thursday, a working day and a school night – why? Surely there are better days and times? Why not at the weekend?

I have no wish to have to take a day off work, losing a day's holiday, to attend but as a local resident who has suffered as a result of the ongoing dust, dirt and traffic caused by gravel works I will have to unless it is moved to a more sensible venue and/or day.

Brett Tarmac replied with the same standard letter they are sending to everyone who has written to them – not answering a single question I raised. They are treating residents with total contempt.

Firm making it difficult for us

Jenny Chalmers, Spearpoint Gardens, Newbury Park, writes:

As someone who lives opposite the proposed sand and gravel development site, I am appalled

at the lack of notice given by Brett Tarmac for the consultation exhibition, the timing and the location of this event.

Why hold it on a weekday when many people will be unable to attend because of work and family commitments?

Why hold it at a time of year when those who rely on public transport will have to brave the cold, rain and possibly snow to get to it?

The last consultation was held in the summer of 2011 in a tent on the proposed site so why now hold it outside the neighbourhood of those directly affected and making it difficult for those without transport to get there?

Why give just over two weeks' notice of the event when you have been planning this extraction for years? (Eight years in fact!)

I would love answers to those questions, but Brett Tarmac sent back a standard letter of reply without even attempting to give me answers. I can only surmise that they are making it as difficult as possible for those who are affected to get there to try and reduce the opposition to their plans.

I have suffered from the noise, dust and pollution from previous extractions. The company has consistently failed to meet any deadlines or honour any written statements about working conditions (such as noise and dust levels) so that I, along with many residents, will not be taken in by any whitewashing at this

exhibition and will be vocal and visual in our opposition.

The thought that they are planning to go ahead with this so near where people, including young children, live, shows they have no consideration and only contempt for our environment and welfare. We have had enough and will fight them at every stage to stop this further desecration of our neighbourhood happening.

Brett rubbing salt in a raw wound

Graham Leach, Ramsgill Drive, Aldborough Hatch, writes:

I write in respect of the exhibition proposed by Tarmac concerning their plans to extract further gravel at Aldborough Hatch.

They have chosen to hold this exhibition on one day only, a weekday, at Redbridge Football Club in Barkingside.

I am both surprised and disappointed that they should hold the residents of Aldborough Hatch in such low regard, and I have to wonder why they chose this venue, and at such an inconvenient time for most local people, instead of the church hall at St Peter's.

Previous meetings about the gravel extraction have been held at weekends at the church halls and have been well attended by residents over a number of days. That Tarmac should now hold the exhibition outside the area at a venue that is very difficult for many to get to appears at best defensive and at worst cynical.

Furthermore, in terms of access Tarmac could not have made it more difficult for those without a car. Even supposing that people can negotiate public transport to Barkingside, there is still a considerable walk to the venue from either the nearest bus stop or the Underground station.

How they expect the more mature members of our community, who may not have a car or find public transport difficult, to visit the football club I have no idea.

Tarmac has suggested laying on a minibus from St Peter's, but this merely rubs salt in an already raw wound, as it highlights their disregard for local people in that they have to provide transport to a venue outside the area. I think I will hold on to the word "cynical".