

VILLAGERS OF APPELEY BRIDGE IN FIGHT AGAINST NEW LANDFILL SITE

Plans to drain East Quarry in Appley Bridge to turn it into a landfill site have been met with resistance from local residents. The Environment Agency has received a significant number of objections regarding the landowner's application for a Water Abstraction Licence to drain East Quarry (1). Maybrook Investments also owns the landfill at Parbold Hill, where plans to start a new round of landfilling received over 1,000 objections from residents worried about noise, dust and traffic pollution. If Maybrook Investments were to drain and landfill East Quarry, householders fear that similar problems would also be experienced in Appley Bridge.

Local resident Susan Dingle said "In last week's Wigan Observer, a representative from Northern Diver claimed that the draining of East quarry has community support. This is not correct. Many residents of our village are in fact against it. Draining the quarry will leave it significantly more dangerous than the lake itself."

Anne Fletcher commented, "If this quarry is drained and then landfilled, the quality and way of life for our village will be devastated for decades. We would still have a large, deep hole in the ground for many years because landfilling can take a very long time to complete. Some people would be attracted to climb the dangerous steep sides or ride bikes at the bottom. Trespassing following the draining of the quarry would not be restricted to warm weather but would be an all year-round event. This could lead to the village exchanging a few days of antisocial behaviour for 10 years or more of landfill dust, noise and pollution from tipper trucks. I hope that residents and businesses think long and hard about supporting the draining of East Quarry."

Maybrook Investments' plan is to discharge the quarry water into Calico Brook which runs into the River Douglas, but permission is needed from the relevant authorities due to the risk of flooding and damage to the brook. Calico Brook was the site of the 1987 flood which caused significant damage to surrounding properties.

Susan Dingle added, "A spokesperson for the quarry owner stated that it will take a matter of weeks to drain which is also incorrect. This quarry is vast and contains over 3.7 billion cubic metres of water which, if pumped for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week would take a year to drain." (1) Local resident and Managing director of a Manchester based shipping company, Julian Chambers said "The local authorities have already stated it would take between 10-15 years to fill in this quarry. So that's 10-15 years of heavy trucks driving up and down Appley Lane North. 10-15 years of heavy trucks driving through Parbold, Wrightington, Shevington each one loaded with over 24 metric tonnes of so called 'inert waste'. The end result would be the plan to sell the land for a large profit to a housing developer so they can build another 300 plus houses in a village already at capacity".

Residents say that there are far better ways of making the quarry safe such as creating a nature reserve. Susan Dingle explained, "This area has become a wildlife haven with rare breeding birds taking residence such as swifts, oystercatchers, kingfishers and cormorants plus swans, Canada geese, coots, kestrels and crows along with rare breeds of bat, butterfly and newt. An annual report launched by Sir David Attenborough (2) revealed 40% of UK species are in decline and loss of habitat is one of the biggest causes. Quarries such as this have been preserved successfully in other parts of the country, such as Ripon City Wetlands in Yorkshire (3) and Blackwater Valley in Berkshire". (4)

ENDS

1. Environment Agency Water Abstraction Licence Application Maybrook Investments Ltd
Ref:NPS/WR/031173
2. The "State of Nature" report revealed that 40% of UK species are in decline and loss of habitat is one of the biggest causes. This can be found on
<https://protect-eu.mimecast.com>
3. Ripon City Wetlands in Yorkshire - <https://www.theconstructionindex.co.uk/news/view/from-quarry-to-nature-reserve>
4. Blackwater Valley in Berkshire, part of the quarry restoration and conservation scheme led by Cemex UK <https://www.cemex.co.uk/restoration-and-conservation.aspx>

