

# Parish Council

## Revised planning application for mineral extraction by Earthline at Wheatleys Farm.

### Application No 17/12064/WCM - Closing date for comments 14 June 2021

Over the years, the Parish Council has objected to the planning application for mineral extraction by Earthline at Wheatleys Farm, along with 470 parishioners and the local MP.

This is the 4<sup>th</sup> consultation since 2017 and in that time Earthline have done very little to address our concerns around:

- Noise, dust and pollution - affecting all the village which will last for 8 years or more.
- Flooding - the scale of the excavation is likely to increase the flooding risk
- Ecology. It will take about 20-25 years before the damage to hedgerows and water meadows recovers and will have immediate impact on our wildlife.
- Traffic. We'll have HGVs every 10 minutes using the B4696
- Protecting land not yet quarried as set out in the Wiltshire CC Landscape Character Assessment report 2009.
- The overall and cumulative impact on our village of the above.

On the basis that village isn't going to benefit AND will be negatively impacted by this quarry, the Parish Council is going to put in it's objection. Again! **We thought you might like to see the detail behind our objections., So we've outlined them on pages 16 and 17**

### Want to have your say? You have until the 14 June to comment.

If you objected last time and still object, you need to do again otherwise the planners will assume that your concerns have been addressed.

For everyone else who wishes to comment or object to the planning application, it's easy to do.

- Comment online at [www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk). The page is difficult to find though and you might find it easier to use this shortened URL - <https://bit.ly/2QBico4>. The link is also on the AKPC website - [www.akpc.org.uk](http://www.akpc.org.uk) or Nextdoor - search Warren Boon who posted the link under Wheatley Farm Gravel Extractions
- By email - [developmentmanagement@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:developmentmanagement@wiltshire.gov.uk) quoting application no 17/12064/WCM
- By post. Development Services Wiltshire Council Monkton Park Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 1ER. Again quote the application number 17/12064/WCM.

The more objections received, the greater chance there is of the application being turned down.

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More news at [www.akpc.org.uk](http://www.akpc.org.uk)

**Next Parish Council meeting on  
Wednesday 23 June 2021 7.15pm in the Village Hall**

(main hall) subject to approval at May meeting.

Please contact Fiona Ryder, 07394 856232, for more details  
[clerk@akpc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@akpc.org.uk) or 07394 856232

# Revised planning application for mineral extraction by Earthline at Wheatleys Farm.

Cont

**Application No 17/12064/WCM - PLEASE ACT NOW, closing date 14/6/21**

The need for minerals extraction is understood. However this application site is not in the "Wiltshire and Swindon Aggregate minerals site allocation plan" May 2013-2026. The Minerals Plan identifies other sites which will provide Wiltshire's aggregate needs to 2026. This includes one already allocated to Earthline at Blackburr Farm.

This proposal is planned to last 10 years with no benefit to the village at all, apart possibly from access to a small lake; there are already 170 lakes in the Waterpark.

For decades, Ashton Keynes has suffered the impact of almost constant quarrying. Just as the end was in sight with the Dairy Farm quarry restoration due to be completed by 2025 and Cotswold Community quarry by 2022 we have this proposal for yet another quarry.

## **THIS QUARRY IS JUST TOO CLOSE AND WILL AFFECT THE WHOLE VILLAGE**

This is the fourth consultation since 2017 and to date none of our concerns have been addressed.

The quarry, similar to the size of the village, is just outside the conservation area to the South.

It will affect the whole village as noise, dust and exhaust fumes will be spread by the prevailing wind. And some 80-90 homes are in direct lines to the proposed workings.

This is the last area of local countryside not damaged by quarrying.

## **THE AREA WILL BE AN INDUSTRIAL WORK SITE FOR TEN YEARS AFFECTING THE LOCAL WILDLIFE.**

Since the early days of extensive quarrying the village has grown greatly and will more people working at home the tranquility of Ashton Keynes is essential for all our families.

## **EVEN WITH RESTORATION IT WILL TAKE AROUND 20-25 YEARS TO RETURN TO ITS CURRENT STATE**

**Comments on the new material and our original concerns are set out below: -**

### **New submission**

The applicant Earthline has submitted further evidence to support its proposed project.

The area covered stretches from Waterhay to the west end of the Derry and out to the B4696. In total area it is similar to the settlement area of the village.

The last application was objected to by the local MP, the Parish Council and 470 people in the village. These objections have been largely

**If you want to comment you need to do this by 14 June.**

**It's easy to do.  
See page 15 for details.**

**If you're busy and have objected before, please simply confirm (via email, post, online) that your previous objections are still valid.**

ignored in the new information presented. As it is not clear whether our earlier objections will be taken into account it is vital that we restate our concerns about this highly intrusive development to Wiltshire planning authorities.

Most, if not all of the previous reasons villagers and the Parish Council had for objecting to the original application are still valid.

The principle changes presented by the applicant relate to the completion of 18 new houses at Wheatley's Farm adjacent to the proposed excavation (extending the boundary immediately behind the houses) and to conservation issues raised by Wiltshire's conservation officer. In their latest submissions the number of lakes following restoration have been reduced from 7 to 3, the impact on flood risk has been restated, a revised landscape impact assessment presented and the restoration details clarified.

Nothing in the new information, relating to restoration and ecological matters, reduces the impacts on and damage to the peace of the village and its residents during the excavation period. You can object on one or more of the following points:

**THE CUMULATIVE IMPACT-** The closest quarry site to the village at Dairy Farm has recently (2019) had its restoration and processing operations extended to 2025. The village has suffered noise, dirt, dust and HGV traffic for around 80 years and should not be expected to have another quarry on its doorstep extending out to 2031. It is understood local aggregates companies rejected the Wheatley's Farm site on the grounds of poor mineral quality and the severe intrusion on the village (less than 100m from village properties). The 10 year operation is excessive for the volumes to be removed. At the Cotswold Community, Hills are removing 4 times the volume in just 3 years using conveyors which reduces noise although there are no houses close by.

**NOISE.** The proposed project is only a few metres from the main settlement of Ashton Keynes (over 80 houses currently have a direct line of impact to the quarry proposed, 90 if the 10 houses at Carters site in Happy Land are approved). The Earthline noise studies set high current background levels enabling them to propose operating at daytime noise levels above government recommended limits. Also 24/7 pump operation for 10 years will mean nighttime noise levels twice acceptable limits. The prevailing wind will drag the noise across the entire village and reversing alarms will be heard all day.

**DUST** The applicant has dismissed dust and Nitrous Oxide (NOX) as a problem ignoring the fact that the prevailing wind for much of the year will drag fine dust across the village. Both a nuisance and health hazard. Dust levels in the village are already high from mineral haulage on the B4696. HGV traffic will cross a section of the High Road beyond the 18 new houses continuously.

**FLOOD RISK .** We currently experience flooding at south end of the village and the scale of the excavation below the water table will increase this with a heavy reliance on ditches in perpetuity. For the duration of this proposal we will lose the current ground water and surface water drainage from the flood plain covering this vast area of extraction . The restoration proposal is unlikely to return us to the current drainage capacity which already fails to cope in the winter months getting worse annually.

**ECOLOGY** This is rich agricultural land with hedgerows and the banks of the river Thames rich in a large range of wildlife (voles, otters, badgers, frogs newts) and birds ( swans, ducks, geese, kingfishers, egrets, wagtails- 54 bird species have been observed in a recent Millennium Green survey). The excavation, which takes place either side of the Thames will cause a

natural migration away from this part of the village not just for the 10 years of operation but well beyond. Earthline's new detailed analysis of restoration does show how they will hope to recover the damage to hedgerows and water meadows. However, we are talking of about 20-25 years to reach the maturity we have today. The land to be excavated at the Southern end of Ashton Keynes is one of the few areas of Countryside left in the Waterpark unaffected by gravel extraction. With the Waterpark now a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) this area represents an internationally important conservation area.

**TRAFFIC.** The traffic studies grossly underestimate the problems caused by the Earthline lorries crossing the high road on a bend east to west to the processing plant. One lorry every 10 minutes emerging onto the B4696 with limited visibility must increase accident risk on an already dangerous road.

**GENERAL IMPACT ON ASHTON KEYNES** The new submission claims that the proposed quarry will not adversely affect the quality of life we enjoy in the village because residents are already impacted by the Dairy Farm Quarry (However now in its restoration phase with little or no extraction and reprocessing activities for 33 days pa), the noise from the B4696 ( which they will add to greatly), intense agricultural activity ( a few grazing sheep in the summer?), the large agricultural buildings in the Derry (The piggery not seen in the summer) and the networks of footpaths which so many of us enjoy. This is in contradiction of the Wiltshire CC Landscape Character Assessment report 2009 which notes how quarrying has changed the countryside with poor restoration and maintenance and that areas not quarried to date should be protected. This is why in part the Waterpark is now an SSSI.

### **Why should the village endure much worse disturbance than currently and for a decade**

The need for minerals extraction is understood for the construction industry. However, this site is not in the Minerals Plan and not required. Furthermore, the selection of a poor quality site, adjacent to the village conservation area and settlement boundary, with a decade of severe noise and dust nuisance, loss of rich agricultural land, long term impacts on the local ecology and flood risk with no benefit to the village is quite wrong and should be rejected by our planning authorities.

**If you wish to object to this application - please let Wiltshire Council know your comments by 14 June deadline. See page 15 for details**