

Aldborough Hatch Defence Association

21st August 2014

Cllr. Wes Streeting

Wes.Streeting@redbridge.gov.uk

Dear Wes,

I have seen your website and your comments there about gravel. I would just point out that gravel workings on Fairlop Plain did not start in 1984 – but, in fact, in the 18th Century. There are maps showing this! The more recent workings started in the mid-1950s

Thanks, too, for your message of 19th August with your considered response. As you have also put your views forward on your website, I have decided to include a link to this on the AHDA website and to publish this response. I will be brief in reply.

1. The AHDA is fully aware of the Mayor of London's targets. Redbridge and Havering are the two east London Borough involved. Redbridge has met these targets over the past 50 years. Havering has not – and has only recently started to excavate, hence the workings off the A12 between Whalebone Lane and Mawney Road.
2. Other parts of the Borough have not suffered. There must be gravel elsewhere – how about Valentines Park being sacrificed for a few years in the same way that we are being asked to lose Aldborough Hatch Farm for six years (which on past record will go on for at least double that time)? Such a suggestion would produce a public outcry and rightly so. But why should Aldborough Ward have to take the brunt again and again and again? After all, residents throughout the Borough have benefitted from the income.
3. The AHDA is aware of the Council's Minerals Plan. This was agreed by all parties on the Council – they had no choice but to do so! We have made clear in the past our total opposition to extraction coming any closer to the residential area of Aldborough Hatch.
4. Whilst it is true the Conservatives have supported gravel extraction in the past, there have been times when Aldborough Ward Councillors have not given their support when it came to voting. Further, the workings were not on the immediate doorstep of the ward.
5. Various contractors over the years have made promises that have not been kept. The latest concerns Aldborough Hall Farm, - where we lost a much-valued pick-your-own facility to gravel and were promised that we would have a conservation area with public bridleway within six years. It has now taken 12 years and there is no end in sight – let alone a public bridleway! The area to the north of Painters Road is a devastated waste as is the land of Aldborough Hall Farm. The homes in Applegarth Drive and Bawdsey Avenue have backed onto workings for over 12 years – and now have an overgrown desolate area of weeds backing onto their gardens, blowing the seeds and dust into their gardens. I have received a number of complaints about this from folk who enjoy their gardens – but nothing has been done to help them.
6. You mention transportation of the minerals. Can you conceive of the effect of the roadway that is to be built from Bridleway 93 to the conveyor in Painters Road? It will not be a road with a tarmac surface – but a dirt track along which open top lorries will speed, sending dust onto people and animals on the golf course and equestrian centre, and onto the permissive footpath from the top of Aldborough Road North to Fairlop Waters – used by students from the Torbitt School, walkers, riders and cyclists – with no apparent provision for the crossover. When I suggested to Brett Lafarge at the meeting here that the lorries might be covered, their response was that this would not be possible. They said that the sand and gravel would be wet – but when I asked about the infill, they said covering was not an option. So yet more dust and dirt is to be distributed over the area.

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7. The AHDA has adopted a stance of Enough is Enough in response to the simple fact that we are being told by residents that they have had more than they can take and more than their fair share of misery, dirt, dust, noise, etc. The AHDA has had no alternative but to take this position. We represent the residents. By the same token, many folk believe that they elect ward councillors to do the same – ie, represent the views of their constituents. It is up to you how you vote when it comes to the crunch, but whatever you decide you must take the consequences – just as the AHDA has to do.
8. I am given to understand that following election, ward councillors are required to sign a declaration that their first duty is to the residents of the ward that elected them. I would be interested to have your comment on this in view of the groundswell of opinion that is building up within Aldborough Ward with the Enough is Enough Campaign.
9. Speaking personally, I do not make public my political views. I would hope we might keep politics out of this issue for I would not wish to influence how people might vote in any future elections.

Regards,

Ron Jeffries
Chairman