

**TEMPLE GUITING PARISH COUNCIL – A CALL FOR A FRESH APPROACH TO  
QUARRYING ACTIVITIES IN THE COTSWOLD DISTRICT AONB**

Recent applications for quarrying in the northern part of the Cotswold District AONB (notably in or close to **Temple Guiting, Cutsdean, Naunton, Guiting Power and Upper Slaughter parishes**) have highlighted the challenges of reconciling legitimate applications to extend quarrying operations with conserving and enhancing the AONB and maintaining the quality of life of local residents.

Whilst the development of a new Local Minerals Plan should help with strategic planning issues, the Plan omits reference to many existing quarries and does not appear to take into account possible applications for extending quarries or indeed for the creation of new quarries in the area. The Plan appears to be more a compliance with national policy than a plan genuinely responsive to local needs.

At the local level, quarrying activities often affect more than one Parish Council, as has been seen with HGV movements (often along unsuitable roads), intrusive noise transmission from quarries and the visual impact of quarrying operations (including an apparent reluctance and delay in complying with restoration conditions by some quarry operators).

Temple Guiting Parish Council proposes that the management of quarry planning applications and their subsequent monitoring requires a more holistic approach by the Planning Authority. **Applications for quarrying cannot continue to be treated in isolation one from another** since, cumulatively, they are already severely impacting on the AONB and the lives of local residents, and will continue to do so under current procedures.

Such an approach is essential in order to protect the AONB. It is recognized that current planning procedures may militate against this. However, a way needs to be found at local level involving coordination between Parish Councils which represent the local community, the Cotswold District Council as first call planning authority, local groups interest groups such as the Cotswold Conservation Board, quarry operators and the GCC Minerals Team (which is responsible for monitoring quarrying operations to ensure compliance with short and long term planning conditions) and the quarry operators themselves.

We believe that, with cooperation and the application of best practice, it should be possible to mitigate the potentially adverse impact of quarrying in this area over time. Such an approach could include:

**1. Establishment of a local group to review and address issues as they occur in this part of the AONB.** It is envisaged that such a group might include representation from all or some of the following:

- *Elected members: GCC and CDC*
- *GCC Planning / Minerals Team and Highways / Highways*
- *Cotswold District Council Planning Department*
- *Local Parish Councils*
- *Local quarry operators*
- *Cotswold AONB (Conservation Board)*
- *Environmental Groups such as CPRE*

2. **Drawing up guidance on best practice to guide applicants, authorities and interested groups.** Such guidance might cover the requirements for individual quarry applications, operation and reinstatement in a manner that is consistent with the area.
3. **Developing a more coherent approach to dealing with multiple quarrying applications in the area.** Current practice means that quarry applications are dealt with in isolation and the process does not therefore consider cumulative effects of individual applications. There is a need for a holistic approach for considering and determining conditions which take into account the combined effect of multiple quarries operating in the same area
4. **Permits for extraction should be limited in duration, and extensions should be conditional on a demonstration that effective operation management practices are in place combined with a clear continued commitment to reducing the environmental impact of operations in the area.** Recent applications for extension of works have been based on a continuation of existing practices with no clear commitments or obligations to reduce impacts over time (e.g. use of technology or changing equipment). In some cases requests to extend extraction licences have been made, and approved, in advance of the commencement of reinstatement works.
5. **The Planning Authority should be seen to be actively monitoring quarrying operations and there should be greater liaison with local parish councils** in both responding to concerns and reporting back on monitoring and enforcement.
6. **Mineral Levy funding should be clearly visible to local communities as should projects funded by the levy which should benefit the local communities that have been affected by the works.** Currently there is limited awareness and visibility of contributions made and of the projects the funding has been used for. (Increased engagement of communities with Quarry operators should also help address this)

Change will take time, effort and more specifically coordination. It will require a willingness of interested groups to work together. This has been achieved in other industry sectors based on best practices, understanding and partnership between the interested groups which will all have a long term interest in good practice to their mutual benefit.

**Steps to move this forward potentially include:**

- i. Engagement of interested groups
- ii. Development of clear 'Terms of Reference'
- iii. Establishment of a 'Local Review Group'
- iv. Development, publication and adoption of 'Best Practices'

This may require some funding but, if this is aligned with the interests of all groups, then funding should not be an obstacle. In any event, this could be considered to be a valid expenditure for funds collected as part of the Mineral Levy.

Temple Guiting Parish Council is too small to achieve changes of this scale by itself, but with input from all interested parties including quarry operators and a willingness to work together, it should be possible to ameliorate both current and future impacts of quarrying activities in this part of the Cotswold AONB.