

Minutes of Temple Guiting Quarry Working Party

Meeting with GCC Highways Department

Held on Monday 7th June 2021 at 9.00 a.m.

Online

TGPC attendees: Stephen Gower (Chairman, TGQSWP), Jane Ewart-Perks, David Sandy, Ali Clifton-Brown, Maxi Freeman (Clerk)

GCC attendees: Stephen Hawley (SH) (Highways Development Leader), Simon Excel (SE) (Lead Commissioner), Kevin Phillips (KP) (Planning Policy Manager, reports to SE), Luisa Senft-Hayward (LSH) (Transport Planning Manager, reports to SE), Rhodri Grey (RG) (Highways Manager, reports to Bob Skillern), Hannah Basset-Lewis (HBL) (by phone).

1. Naunton quarry planning application

SE clarified that permission for Naunton quarry to extend was still waiting for a legal agreement regarding the tunnel under Buckle Street should quarrying stop before the end of the permission.

2. Traffic data

TGQWP raised the issue of incomplete traffic data to define quarry traffic in the North Cotswold Cluster. The data for 2019, presented in the Oathill application, and additional survey carried out by GCC Highways in November 2020 was discussed. It was agreed that the traffic counts and the variations in hgv movements during the year with peak movements in Aug / Sept, presented in the Oathill application, were valid reference points.

Evidence from the Oathill application includes detailed traffic data which does not support the assertions in the Naunton application. This data showed that an average of 400 HGVs pass through Ford on the B4077 per day. SH commented that additional data from Naunton would not have been requested because there was no proposed change to the output from the quarry.

SH confirmed his responses to the Naunton application that the data was 'assumed', rather than actual. He added here that no data had been collected during the Covid crisis. TGQWP asked whether historical data for at least the last 10 years was available.

(Action) SE asked RG/KP to find out whether this was available and to circulate it. Due to confidentiality of production data the numbers would need to be anonymous and would not be for individual quarries but could be amalgamated for all 7 quarries in the Cluster. KP agreed to deliver available data.

SG stated that the need for cumulative impact assessments is included in UK legislation (which mirrors EU law) is then included in the NPPF. In turn, this is included in the MLP which also includes reference to the assessment of transport routes. The EU court states that the total impact cannot be ignored. While Naunton may have remained fairly constant, other quarries have added significantly to the number of HGVs e.g. Cotswold Hills now has no limits to the number of vehicles. Guiting has re-opened and Oathill has applied to double its output.

3. Impact of increasing quarry traffic on local residents

Ali Clifton-Barnard, resident of Upper Coscombe, opposite Naunton quarry, stated that there had been a significant increase in traffic especially since Guiting quarry reopened with HGVs often travelling in convoy. This increase had resulted in high levels of noise and dust both inside and outside her home.

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David Sandy, resident of Ford, outlined the problems in Ford. The sharp bend means that vehicles have to slow down, often suddenly. The bridge over the Windrush is too narrow for 2 HGVs to pass easily so they are often forced to a halt. The speed of the lorries on the bend means that, even if sheeted, large stones fly out of the lorries and litter the road. For walkers following the Gloucestershire Way, the situation is very dangerous as there is no pavement and very little verge so they are in the direct path of the lorries. David also said that houses close to the road vibrate with the passage of the HGVs. Dust was another issue that had increased significantly in the past 10 years. Cleaned surfaces are covered again the next day.

Jayne Ewart-Perks, resident of Ford, said that she moved to her current home 20 years ago. In the past 10 – 15 years she had noticed the increase in aggregate and lime carried in HGVs outside her house. The noise and vibration are extremely unpleasant and threatening. Her home is Grade 2 listed so she cannot double glaze. She also cannot use the garden during the day. This loss of amenity starts often before 6 a.m. and every day a convoy of 3 or 4 HGVs passes her home at 6.45 – 7.00 a.m. She has also seen unsheeted lorries on the road and drivers exceeding the speed limit while using their phones. This has resulted in numerous phone calls to the hauliers responsible. Lorries are getting bigger and there are now more HGVs on the B4077 than on the Fosse Way, a designated strategic route.

Maxi Freeman, resident of Kineton, stated that the available data showed that the main product of quarrying the North Cotswold cluster was not Cotswold stone for building and roofing, but aggregate and lime. The NPPF regulations permit quarrying in an AONB in exceptional circumstances. In this instance, that exception is to preserve the heritage features of the Cotswold AONB. Lime and aggregate do not meet this criterion. Some 'waste' is inevitable when quarrying for Cotswold stone products however reserves of Cotswold stone are dwindling.

Stephen Gower, resident of Kineton, stated that he experienced aggressive driving from quarry vehicles regularly on the roads in the area, including speeding and intimidation of other drivers. The area has many footpaths and bridleways but walking and riding on roads which link those paths is increasingly dangerous. It is clear that there has not been an assessment of the effects this is having on residents' mental health and loss of amenity. Businesses and visitors are also negatively affected by these issues and, given that tourism is the major generator of income in the area, the financial impact should also be considered.

4. Comments from Kevin Phillips re traffic and quarrying

KP said that he had been in post for 25 years. During that time the issues had changed. He listed the MLP, a history of aggregate production, a management framework within planning applications, that he was guided by Highways' information, that the sites were monitored once operational.

SG responded that Highways had not questioned the noise, dust, road impacts of the Naunton application; and that no quarry application or response to an application had examined these factors. The Naunton application had not assessed the position on the basis that the application did not increase traffic, even though traffic from other sources using the same roads had increased.

KP cited the policy framework where cumulative impact is considered. CDC provides health advice. Health agencies' advice is considered and GCC could only assess one individual case at a time.

Guiting quarry existed in the past so there is no change there.

5. Comments from Stephen Hawley

GCC can't manage driver behaviour. CDC Environmental Health is responsible for monitoring noise, dust etc. Contraventions would have to pass the 'Severe Impact' test. This would mean that the

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transport network failed badly. Differences between the Oathill figures, the survey funded by Cllr Nigel Moor, and the figures submitted in the Naunton application had no relevance as the extension would not generate an increase in traffic from Naunton. No accidents or other negative impact patterns had been found. SG mentioned that the Naunton data reported 8 vehicles when 200 were measured in the survey. SH responded by saying they cannot control the size or number of vehicles and that the numbers did not need to be challenged as the overall production was not changing. However; a new application would be reviewed but in the context of the situation. Consent to extend is not a new application and the impacts of Guiting together with Naunton were not considered together.

6. Opportunities for remedial action

SG asked how to get an assessment of the impacts. SH said that an independent consultant would do that and repeated that GCC can only look at individual planning applications. If a CDC assessment revealed environmental health impacts, these would need to be submitted to the GCC Planning Committee, which decides on the weight to be given in these situations. CDC and Tewksbury could potentially exercise 'statutory nuisance' powers but there was a high bar for this to be used.

SG raised the idea of Traffic Managed Areas, first introduced by Bob Skellern a number of years earlier, as a mitigation measure. It could include speed reductions, changes to operating hours and a reduction to a 5 day week. The area concerned is small and has very few access points and destinations, so would be much more easily managed than the previous attempt in the south Cotswolds. Recent technology developments would also reduce the cost.

SH referred to the LTP and confirmed that all participants carried out their individual statutory jobs. LSH stated that traffic data was collected but not for local roads. She expressed the view that she 'Can't see how to intervene' and it would be costly. RG agreed but would discuss it with Bob Skillern. (Action).

SH stated that limiting movements was difficult and that using tonnage produced, rather than specifying the number of vehicle movements as a planning condition. was a better measure.

7. Guiting quarry contravention of reinstatement condition of original permit

KP explained that GCC had not enforced the condition for restoring Guiting quarry as it had been 'timed out legally'.

TGQWP agreed to forward information pulled together on Cumulative Impact including. A follow up discussion may then be appropriate. TGQWP will also contact CDC Environmental Health and the road haulage association for discussions.

Signed 

27 July 2021

Chairman