

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Possible application for a Sand Quarry at Horncroft

Many villagers managed to attend the exhibition staged in our Village Hall on Saturday 7th November on behalf of the Barlavington Estate. They will now have a good idea of what is proposed. For those who were unable to attend we would like to clarify certain points.

The Horncroft site is in Bury parish but the Barlavington Estate recognises that any development will affect the villagers of Fittleworth, and that we will want to keep a close eye on any developments. Bury's neighbouring councils, including ourselves and Sutton with Barlavington, are in close touch with Bury.

As yet (13th Nov.) no application for planning permission has been submitted; the exhibition was designed to test public opinion and reaction. When the application is submitted it will be judged against ten key criteria: landscape, archaeology, ecology, access & highways, sustainability, pollution control, noise, air, dirt and water, of which those underlined are seen by the firm managing the potential development as the areas requiring most thorough attention. We have asked West Sussex to make sure that light pollution is included under the pollution control heading; to recognise that the B2138 is unfit for HGVs, let alone an increase in their number (and indeed that the A283 has in the past been cited as inadequate for this purpose) and that it is difficult to conceive that lorries will not travel through our village; and to recognise that, in their own analysis, other sites had been shortlisted while Horncroft had not.

West Sussex needs to maintain at least seven years 'landbank' of sand; at present it has approximately three years. The county is therefore under pressure to open up new sand quarries. It is calculated that the Horncroft site, approximately 56 acres of high-grade dry sand, would yield 1.5 million tonnes over 20 years, or 75,000 tonnes a year. This would mean 20 full lorries per day (40 lorry movements) working five and a half days a week. The work would be open-cast, scooping the sand off the surface, and would not penetrate the water-table.

We shall try to keep you informed.