



HIGHBARNES PUBLIC MEETING
5.10.09
NASH MILLS C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendees: DBC, Hyder Consulting, Residents of Highbarnes and Pond Road, Herts Police, Herts Highways

1. Welcome and Introductions

Mike Peters started the meeting with apologies to residents for the terminology used by Dacorum Borough Council in relation to using the word "project". It was not wished to upset those affected by this matter or to demean the situation.

Introductions were made and an explanation of the situation at Highbarnes and Pond Road.

Reference was made to the history of the case. In 2001 there was a partial collapse at No. 5 Pond Road, it was not until 2007 when there was another collapse at No 5 Highbarnes, that it was established that there were chalk mines present. The first public meeting was on 29th October 2008. Since then there have been regular public updates.

2. Progress

Dave Martin confirmed the work undertaken since the second collapse has been progressing. Funding for the project is underway, this is a two stage process whereby applications made to the HCA for the first stage have been satisfactorily completed. The second stage requires crucial detailing of facts including the history of the mines, planning consents, environmental regulations, hence DBC have enlisted the services of Hyder Consulting as project managers for the scheme who have had previous experiences of this type of funding application.

It was advised that with the need to get the best possible results for the residents the process will take time and patience, submitting a claim with insufficient detail could result in less (or no) funding.

3. Residents Group

Michelle Berkeley of Pond Road and Richard Taylor of

Highbarns spoke at the meeting and explained the role of the Residents Group. They are part of the group along with 3 other local residents. Meetings are held at 6 weekly intervals involving Dacorum Borough Council plus the Police, Local Parish Council and County Highways Officers whereby information is exchanged on subjects such as road closures, paving, street lighting etc.

RT confirmed that the area was now secure with the installation of bollards. Grass areas had been seeded, planters installed and filled with the help of the Borough and Parish Council. It was suggested that residents could help keep the plants watered. Street lamps are all working and the signage approved. Some roads and footpaths have been resurfaced. There are still some access issues to be considered but this is difficult until the area has been filled in. The phone box is now in use.

There have been incidents with motorcycles and scooters, although this issue seems to be less of a problem at the moment. Another problem is children playing in the streets unsupervised causing concern to other residents. Requested that supervision by parents be available at all times.

It was reported there is a property now on the market. There is interest to see what the impact of the chalk mines will have on planning and saleability.

MB assured residents that should they have concerns to pass them onto either herself or RT who in turn will put them to DBC.

Resident from Pond Road spoke of her concerns regarding access; they have to reverse down road, which raises safety issues. MB to discuss with DBC.

JC thanked RT & MB for their commitment to the Residents Group.

4. Security Issues

Nik Pringle advised that the level of crime within the area was very low, averaging 4-10 crimes per month. Next lowest crime area is Kings Langley, approx 15-20 per month. When the chalk mine incident first happened there were 14-20 per month. There are occasional problems with motorcycles/scooters slipping through the barriers. NP can only follow up these incidents if index numbers or names are put forward. He

suggested residents obtain this evidence. This type of incident is a crime and offenders are liable to costs and points on licences. There will be a newsletter issued soon which will highlight both Nik Pringle's and Lesley Kirkpatrick's, the local PCSO, contact details.

It was advised that the Building Control Office is regularly monitoring the area to ensure there are no problems and to keep up to date with what is happening there.

JC thanked NP and LF for their support of the area and again advised there will be an issue of the next newsletter which will contain contact details and emergency advice.

5. Project Management Team

Introductions and a brief history of Hyder, the global Project Management Company, and their Team were given. Mention was made of a local project carried out in Hatfield, where in 2008 they succeeded in obtaining full funding and treatment of chalk mines.

The Company plan to build on good relationships, ensure the management of risk and support resolutions to secure the maximum amount of funding. They will endeavour to carry out their investigations as quickly and efficiently as possible. Hyder will undertake a detailed risk assessment of the mines, including statements, historical facts and investigations. A geophysical survey will be undertaken to identify high and low risk areas and necessary actions to take place.

Permission to enter gardens will be required and the newsletter will highlight when and how this will be taking place. The results from the survey will ascertain where further action is required. The equipment used for this process of investigation will not cause any noise or damage. Hyder assured residents that success has been gained with some very difficult cases and assured the meeting that they will deal with this issue as quickly as possible.

MP summarised the situation and DM reiterated the need to put forward a "cast iron" case for funding with detailed application for maximum settlement. The investigations should take place over the next few months, followed by the case being forwarded to the HCA to step up the funding position and a strategy for the future.

6. Residents Questions and Answers

Q - Do we need to inform Insurance Companies of subsidence?

A - Linda Dargue advises that most policies do provide subsidence cover and recommended insurance companies are advised, albeit some will not likely respond until a problem occurs ie cracks in walls.

Q - When will Surveys start and will Hyder be available at Residents Meeting?

A - Surveys will start within next few weeks. MP advised funds have been released and officers will be going back to Cabinet to increase this funding. Hyder will be available if required at future Residents' Meetings.

Q - Concern was raised regarding the development of Sappi Graphics Site and road access. This development could possibly cause problems with regard to works vehicles and road closures?

A - MP suggest meeting with Developers and Architects to discuss matter. Advised that planning application is in but not agreed. Possibility that the planning application could include conditions concerning vehicles and access.

Q - Could you be more specific with the timings. If funded by next Spring, what will happen then?

A - DM responded by affirming that the funding application needs to be solid and is required to go through Parliament. He reiterated again the fact that it's a two part scheme, the first to get into the scheme, the second part concerns design, solution and cost estimates. Hyder will gather information as quickly as possible to enable the application for funding to be made.

Q - Is 5-7 years a reasonable time span?

A - Hyder advise that Hatfield started in 2004, completed 2008. In this case 4 years is a broad answer, there are uncertainties as to the exact location of the mines and the fact there is a lot of information to be gathered, will all take time. However, reassurance was given that DBC and Hyder will do their best to bring this situation to a conclusion as quickly as possible.

7. **Herts Highways**

Dave Bowman, Herts Highways, covered the matter raised earlier in the meeting regarding the turning point in Pond Road. He mentioned that HH did not feel it to be advisable to carry out construction works while the mines are being investigated. It was agreed the situation is not perfect although they have dealt with some of the problems including broken kerbs and pathways. He believes turning points would result in people parking in them.

8. MP thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.05pm.

NOTE: A very full set of hand written notes of the meeting are held on Noele Pope's file for additional information if required.