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My name is Sue Meehan and along with John Jackson, Mike Hartung and Craig Tallents we represent Ellenbrook and Smallford Residents Associations. We have actively campaigned against both quarry applications.

Mike Hartung initially raised the awareness of the bromate plume locally in 2015, and has carried out a significant amount of research on the plume to become an expert in this area.

I have been working for an emergency service for the last 37 years in various senior management positions in an information technology directorate. My roles have involved the provision and analysis of information for the service, for both internal and external purposes, implementation of new systems and management of risk.

I have lived in the Ellenbrook area for the past 21 years and my children have grown up here. Since Ellenbrook Fields has been open to the public in 2010 we have taken advantage of the wonderful location that it is, walking our dog and cycling around the fields, discovering the many pleasures that the park has to offer, listening to woodpeckers and owls, spotting deer and foxes, delighting in the bluebells that appear each year in the woods and just enjoying the peace and quiet. This has been particularly important in the Covid pandemic as Ellenbrook Fields has been the only local park that has enough space for residents to enjoy the outdoors and feel safe.

Ellenbrook Fields was promised to residents as part of the redevelopment of the old Hatfield Aerodrome under a section 106 agreement. It was to be an accessible open park for the public to enjoy, creating a much needed leisure space in this area of Hatfield and St Albans. It has been over two decades since the Section 106 agreement.

Despite repeated promises the Section 106 part to grant the lease and form the Trust has not yet been signed and although we have access to the park the financial and legal agreement has failed to materialise to secure the future of Ellenbrook Fields.

The proposed quarry is close to and borders Smallford, Salisbury Village and Ellenbrook residential areas. In fact the quarry actually skirts around Popefield Farm- a Grade 2 listed building; it is just the other side of the narrow A1057 St Albans Road West and it borders housing on Oaklands Lane. The quarry sits right next to the University of Hertfordshire playing fields used by both students and youth sports teams.

The quarry is just too close for comfort.

Ellenbrook and Smallford Residents Associations have campaigned against the quarry proposals for over 5 years

We have invested a huge amount of time and energy into researching the main issues which include the green belt, the cumulative impact of so much quarrying in one small area of Hertfordshire, unrealistic timescales of 32 + years, the impact of noise and dust on our physical and mental health, the additional HGV traffic, increased flood risk, and the bromate pollution and threat to our public water resources,

We engaged with a renowned expert Dr Rivett whose research informed the evidence we produced when objecting to the quarry in 2020.

There is a strong sense of opposition to the quarry from the whole area and hundreds of residents have objected to the proposal to quarry and over 1000 have signed petitions against it.

As residents associations, having already been subjected to quarrying in the area for decades, we were dismayed to find that the site was included in the local mineral plan whilst apparently not complying with policies in it.

We were further horrified when we discovered, after the plan had been adopted, that Ellenbrook Fields sits over and alongside Europe's worst bromate contamination disaster.

The bromate plume, a carcinogen, has leaked from a chemical factory in Sandridge since 1989 with the impact being discovered in 2000.

We were disappointed that the county council planning department had proposed to allow quarrying in an area so polluted with deadly chemicals that the Environment Agency has had to serve a remediation notice to manage the clean-up of the contamination.

There is only one reference to the bromate in the Local Mineral Plan adopted in 2007 which says:

“The proposed site lies over an area contaminated with a plume of Bromate. A more robust risk assessment may be required at this site in order to determine the risk of impact on the Three Valleys Water source at the public water source at Bishops Rise.”

Clearly the magnitude of the bromate contamination was not taken into account or even fully understood when the Local Minerals Plan was drawn up and sadly that seems to be theme of county officers ever since.

When the “resolve to grant” planning permission was originally agreed in 2016, the bromate plume was barely referred to at the planning meeting.

Since then, almost entirely due to the persistence of local residents, the dangers posed by the bromate plume have been identified and the potential risk to health and our water supply have become clearer.

We believe that the authorities should adopt a zero risk strategy toward quarrying on this land because of the risk of bromate contamination to the local and wider water supply.

Despite claims by the appellants that extensive research has been carried out over the last 20 years we are not aware of any research that has specifically looked at the risks associated with quarrying so close to the bromate plume.

We strongly believe that quarrying on Ellenbrook Fields is too high a risk to take because of the bromate proximity. The probability of something untoward occurring may be low, but the impact is too high to ignore. This combination of low probability and high impact is too high a risk for residents to be expected to accept.

We acknowledge that the bromate is extremely unlikely to reach the water that we drink due to the testing that takes place but we are concerned that other public water resources in addition to Bishops Rise, already closed due to the bromate contamination, may be affected and closed down putting strain on a water system that is already under pressure in a wide geographical area.

We also remain concerned that very little research has been undertaken to understand the health impact potentially caused to residents by drinking bromate contaminated water between 1989 and 2000.

In my professional life we constantly assess the risk to our service delivery.

One notable difference between this application and my day to day work in the area of risk management is that at work we usually have a roll back contingency plan in place in case anything goes wrong when we introduce a new service or make a change to an existing one.

In this application there can be no roll back plan, once bromate has entered our water source then it is too late, the bromate will potentially take hundreds of years to eradicate.

As you will see from our statement of case and previous objections we have raised not one or two areas of concerns but numerous ones. These include:

- Impact on the Green belt – the quarry site is huge and the visual impact on an essentially flat landscape is devastating. The site effectively joins Hatfield and St Albans together.
- The cumulative impact of so much quarrying in one small area of Hertfordshire - this area has been blighted with quarrying for decades. To site two quarries side by side and suggest that there is no cumulative impact on the area or residents is insulting
- Unrealistic timescales of 32 + years – to subject the area to quarrying for another three decades and potentially up to 4 or 5 decades and then suggest that this is temporary and reasonable is ludicrous
- The impact of noise and dust on our physical and mental health cannot be underestimated, and the additional HGV traffic in our area cannot be ignored when considered on top of an already congested local road network, that is already at a standstill in peak hours
- Increased flood risk to our area is of major concern to residents when we are already in a high risk flood area. To suggest that the surface water run-off will be reduced is frankly baffling.
- The risk of the bromate spreading towards our public water resource as a result of quarrying is of major concern to us
- The groundwater management plan in our opinion does not provide sufficient safeguards, once the damage is done we believe that it will be too late
- The failure of the first EA remediation plan and unknown potential impact on the 2nd plan – the first EA remediation plan has failed to eradicate the plume and the future plan has not been decided. As Ellenbrook Fields lies over the bromate plume we believe that no

quarrying should be allowed in the area until the plume is completely eradicated.

This inquiry has been a huge learning experience for the Rule 6 parties.

Not only are we all volunteers with no experience in this area but in addition most are in paid employment meaning that we have very limited time to spend on the inquiry preparation.

Yet despite this we have met all the deadlines imposed on us, unlike the other parties.

We have been expected to read long documents that are submitted late and were still being submitted as late as the Friday before the inquiry.

Despite being promised a portal on which to access all documents this has only been provided a week before the inquiry meaning that the management of the documents has been time consuming and exhausting, involving trawling through dozens of emails.

This has put the Residents Associations and the Parish Council at a significant disadvantage to the other Rule 6 parties and we hope that this is taken into account.

Ellenbrook Fields was promised to us as a country park and not an area to be avoided.

This quarry has the potential to impact on local residents for decades to come and the significant ramifications should be fully taken into consideration and not be underestimated.

Hatfield and St Albans have endured quarrying for too long. It is now time to stop any further quarries being inflicted on the local population. We need to protect our green belt and save our water source from being contaminated with bromate.

In conclusion we strongly oppose the Brett application to quarry on Ellenbrook Fields. We do not believe that there is enough benefit to quarrying this land that could outweigh the issues that we have outlined.

The council's reasons for refusing the appeal were fully justified and the Inspector is requested to refuse the appeal and decline planning permission for the quarry on Ellenbrook Fields.