

By email (Hard copy and Copies Circulated by Royal Mail)

**Froggs Hall
Norwich Road
Ditchingham
BUNGAY
Suffolk
NR35 2JU**

John Smith
Clerk Ditchingham Parish Council
Jo-An" 6 Tunneys Lane
Ditchingham
Bungay
Suffolk NR35 2RQ

— 13 December, 2005

RE: The Ditchingham Quarry (Land off Norwich Road B1332).

Dear Mr Smith

I refer to the letter addressed to the Parish Council from Lafarge dated 9th December 2005, copied to myself and others (copy attached). While noting that it was generally agreed at the parish meeting yesterday that the letter provides no comfort to the community, I believe that it is of benefit to be specific with regard to the issues that Lafarge raises. The community has had more than its fair share of PR spin from Lafarge. Either the letter is poorly drafted, or is yet a further attempt to deliberately misrepresent the scheme as proposed, and again an attempt to mislead the public.

Firstly, I would remark that by writing their letter and declining to attend a public meeting, Lafarge has again avoided the opportunity to respond directly to the genuine challenges of the community that publicly they declare they are involving in consultation. The facts are that Lafarge has instructed DL Walker (Mr J.W Gough) not to continue correspondence and has declined to attend ENRAGED residents' meetings, and the Hedenham and the Ditchingham parish meetings.

For the purpose of clarity I remark on each of the issues that Lafarge has identified.

Option Deed: Lafarge states that it will 'surrender its rights.... [and that this] 'will be legally binding between the two parties... '. These words have no useful meaning and provide no assurance or comfort at all.

These words refer only to the 2001 Option. There is absolutely no guarantee that the Estate, acting with Lafarge, or with others, will not enter into some other agreement, now or in the future, to quarry sand and gravel, whether in the areas already identified or in other areas of land that they control. To offer comfort to local residents:

- Lafarge must surrender the existing option;
- the Estate must disclose any similar agreements already entered into; and
- the Estate must enter into a legally binding and irrevocable undertaking, probably by way of covenant, with all impacted parties that they will not, now or in the future, in anyway exploit or permit others to quarry sand and gravel in the [to be] specified areas.

Landfilling: While Lafarge confirm that no landfilling would take place on site, the impact of not doing so is to destroy an even greater area of countryside to achieve 'reprofiling'. Whether the latter is preferable to the former from an ecological perspective, I will not debate on this occasion, although it is reasonable to conclude that the driver behind the decision not to import landfill may well be directly related to the inevitable increase in vehicle movements that would arise as a consequence. That said, however, the least that we should expect from Lafarge with regard to infill is a legally binding and irrevocable undertaking that they and the Estate will not, or permit others, at any time during or after working the Quarry, to do so.

HGV movements: Lafarge assert that '... movements to and from the site are accurately described as 42...' Lafarge go on to say that '... many of these vehicles already use the local road system...and that all that will change will be their point of origin.' Lafarge then remark on readymix. These points are exactly the concern of local residents. That Lafarge endeavour to present this argument in defence of the application, is at the best inept.

Acknowledging that Lafarge remark that these vehicles are already on the local road system, then this applies to a far greater area than Ditchingham alone. It will, for example, include the primary routes such as the A47, A143, A146, and A140, all roads that are designed for heavy vehicles. To change the point of origin to the proposed location will by definition concentrate all traffic movements onto the B1332, a very different proposition. The B1332 is a road, that as a local community, we know (and we have supporting evidence) to be hazardous to use, and also one that the NCC highways department acknowledge, is becoming increasingly inappropriate for the volume and type of traffic that it carries.

With regard [the inclusion or other wise of] readymix, it is of course evident that is unlikely to change the actual 'output' of the quarry, and I assume that this will remain at 100,000 tonnes pa. (although Lafarge has intimated that this could be as high as 125,000 tonnes pa.). Conversely, of concern of course, it should be worthy of remark that any reduction in output would have an adverse impact on the local community, as it would lengthen the duration of operations. However, the point of issue that should be recognised, is that any value added processing to the raw aggregate, whether readymix, or otherwise, will inevitably increase vehicle movements to and from the site. This is undeniable, although Lafarge clearly takes a different stance.

The metric of 42 vehicle movements is calculated on 18 tonne bulk loads assuming output of the Quarry to be at a level equivalent to 100,000 tonnes pa. Lafarge has earlier indicated that [if a readymix plant were to be included as part of the scheme] 60% of aggregate would be exported from the site as readymix. Typically, readmix is transported in 6.5 cubic metre loads. However, if readymix is assumed as part of the scheme, and it seems entirely reasonable to do so, then with part-loads and 'minimix', together with the importation of bulk cement as constituent elements of an accurate calculation, I would challenge that a more accurate metric is in the region of 90 HGV vehicle movements a day at 100,000 tonnes pa, or 125 HGV vehicle movements a day at 125,000 tonnes pa.

Readymix: Lafarge remarks that it has not included a readymix plant within the application. It also remarks that it has no intention of seeking planning permission for a coated roadstone plant. These remarks, both included in their letter of 9th December, together with the issue of HGV movements, also included in that letter, reveal that Lafarge is intentionally highly protective of the readymix issue.

So much so, that it begs the question of what Lafarge' real intentions are. Lafarge has earlier indicated that it reserves the right to introduce readymix to the scheme and will examine that opportunity on the 'planning merits' at that [future] time. I must ask the question why it is that Lafarge is not prepared to categorically state that it has no intention of seeking planning permission for readymix (as it is prepared to do with coated roadstone)? If it is clearly the intention of Lafarge to introduce readymix at a later date, as would appear to be the case, why do Lafarge simply not state that it is their intention do so, and stop playing the nonsense PR games as demonstrated by the presentation of readymix in the non-technical summary?

Right of way: That the Estate will grant a permissive right of way across the site when restoration is complete, offers little in compensation for the loss of amenity to the community, the blight on property values, or general loss to the local economy for the duration of the workings. Contrasted to the Whitlingham scheme that Lafarge makes much of, the landowner Timothy Colman gifted the entire site to the community. A very different proposition indeed!

In conclusion. As confirmed yesterday, it is clear that the attendees at the parish meeting share these same concerns. Given that Lafarge has chosen to correspond with the Parish Council, yet denies this opportunity to other representatives of the community, including **ENRAGED** (albeit that we act with the full support of the Parish Council, and also with the support of our District and County Councillors, and that of our MP), I would ask the Parish Council to raise these questions directly with Lafarge. The Parish Council must demand an adequate response to these issues and accept nothing less.

The Parish Council, as our elected representatives are entitled to a proper response. That Lafarge choose to adopt such an arrogant approach, as they have, is entirely inappropriate and must not be tolerated. There is no benefit to be attributed to this scheme to the parish of Ditchingham, none at all. Indeed quite the opposite.

Yours sincerely

Julian Green

ENRAGED

Attached:

- Stuart Anderson letter 09/12/2005

Copies:

- John Smith, Clerk to Ditchingham Parish Council; Chris Tyacke, Clerk Hedenham Parish Council.
- Alan Burrell, NCC; Richard Carden, SNDC; Richard Bacon, MP.
- Adrian Gunson, Cabinet Member for Panning & Transportation, NCC.
- Mike Jackson, (Director), Stuart Ashworth (Planner), Panning & Transportation Department, NCC.
- Mr Stuart Anderson, Projects Director, Lafarge Aggregates Limited.
- Dyfrig James, MD UK Lafarge, Bruno Lafont, CEO Group Lafarge.
- JW Gough, DL Walker; Ruth Rolls, RR Environmental Communications.
- Robert Tamworth, Ditchingham Estates; Michael Horton, Savills.