

ENVIRONMENT: Fears of effect of sand and gravel extraction

Residents ready to fight quarry

Residents are preparing to form an action group to fight plans for a big sand and gravel quarry in their village, amid fears it will threaten the rural environment.

People living at Ditchingham, near Bungay, want to pool their efforts to prevent Lafarge Aggregates from digging the quarry off the B1332 Norwich Road.

More than a million tonnes of raw material would be extracted from the pit off Fen Lane if given the go-ahead, and it would be in use for up to 11 years.

A small group of objectors has already delivered 100 letters to people living in the area with information about the proposal.

And an exhibition is being held today from noon to 8.30pm by Lafarge Aggregates at the King's Head in Bungay to show the public its plans for the site,

By **MARIA FULCHER**

which have yet to be formally submitted to South Norfolk Council.

Protester Julian Green, who lives in the village, said: "Our message is that we don't want it happening. We are concerned about the road and about the cement plant, which is bad for the environment. We are very positive that we will be successful and stop it."

"About 10 residents have met and expressed a desire to form a group."

"It is still in the early days; until the application goes in and the outcome of the exhibition, we don't know what the level of interest will be."

"Clearly we will have to form a fighting fund and be reliant on the people who are interested to contribute to it, but I don't

think we have plans for tea mornings."

He said that in the next edition of the parish magazine they would be advertising their plans to form a residents' action group with a view to appointing a chairman.

Lafarge Aggregates already operates four quarries in Norfolk - at Whitlingham, near Norwich; Lyng, near Dereham; Easton, near Norwich; and Frettenham, near Norwich - and it has planning permission for a fifth at Swardeston, near Norwich.

The Ditchingham site, if given the go-ahead, would not start production until 2007 and, once excavation was complete, the land would return to agricultural use with extra habitats incorporated such as trees, wet grassland and ponds for wildlife.