

Company may resubmit plans for quarry

CONTROVERSIAL plans for a quarry on a country estate in the Waveney Valley could be resurrected.

Protest banners are still on display in the villages around the proposed quarry site at Ditchingham, suggesting campaigners have not downed tools altogether despite the contentious planning application being withdrawn last month.

And a copy of notes taken at a meeting in January between minerals firm Lafarge and Norfolk County Council show that in the event of a withdrawal, the "applicants confirmed they would seek to resubmit... when the 'time is right'".

A series of public meetings and letters of protest followed last year's announcement by Lafarge that it

wanted to extract sand and gravel from land owned by Earl Ferrers' Ditchingham Hall estate.

But there was an atmosphere of disappointment from some campaigners because it had been hoped that the development would be defeated in front of Norfolk county councillors.

Jonathan Chadd, who lives in the village and belongs to the pressure group Enraged (Norfolk Residents Against Gravel Extraction in Ditchingham), said notes from a meeting between Norfolk County Council and Lafarge showed the international firm was expected to reapply in the coming months.

"The threat from the quarry is clearly there and presently blights the

villages where anyone trying to sell a house has little chance of doing so for months to come," he said.

"In the meantime it is vital that the community is not led to believe that the objectors' battle is won."

Mr Chadd said the plan fell outside the county's Minerals Plan and said it would lead to community having to put up "with the noise, dust and landscape damage".

Ruth Roll, a spokesman for Lafarge, said the company had always been clear in saying it would return to the idea. "We withdrew because of a change of circumstances in the landbank in Norfolk," she said.

Landbank refers to a quota for the total amount of mineral material to be extracted in the county.