

Good morning,

I am Leanne Murray, and I started the Preesall and Knott End Against the Quarry Group when our community first became aware of the possibility of this quarry, after Lancashire County Council alerted the Town Council about the scoping application.

Since then, we have held a series of public meetings, run a petition, and spoken to hundreds of local people face to face in Knott End. Our community feels deeply angry and upset about these proposals.

Our group now has well over two and a half thousand members, despite Preesall and Knott End being essentially a large village community. During the County Council's consultation, approximately 2,000 objections were submitted to LCC. This shows the strength of feeling, the widespread worry and anxiety this quarry has caused, and how poor the applicants' attempts have been to engage with the local community. It also highlights how flawed their plans are. Indeed, as well as a great number of objections, almost every statutory consultee raised concerns, and our group along with many individual and official consultees have pointed out serious problems in the proposals.

One example of poor local engagement and questionable reporting relates to a consultation the appellant claimed to have carried out early in the process.

We have submitted, as part of our Statement of Case, a document on "Public Liaisons". As we understand it, the NPPF states that it is best practice to hold a public consultation or meeting for controversial applications.

Callum Baxter further stated in a press release to the Blackpool Gazette in August 2022 that he was "keen to work with the community to put people's minds at rest".

The application to LCC also stated that "a series of discussions and liaisons had been held with local residents to discuss the proposals, together with extensive liaison with local groups who have an interest in the proposed scheme. Discussions have included the working scheme and restoration, and as part of these discussions the proposed extraction scheme and landscaping near to the properties has been amended to reduce the potential impacts and bring forward advanced landscaping and planting."

This perplexed our group, so our local Wyre Councillor investigated, and it appears that this "detailed consultation" amounted to a handful of emails with the Lancaster Road Quarry Boundary Residents Group, and someone from Greenfield Environmental claiming to have spoken to a dog walker, someone washing their car, and someone looking after a horse.

I do not consider this to be a public consultation, and it certainly does not live up to the claims made in documentation submitted by Greenfield Environmental.

We recognise this is not a key planning matter, but it does demonstrate our concerns about the appellant not always submitting accurate information, and not operating in line with best practice or procedures.

Turning to the key reasons we believe this appeal must be dismissed, I want to be clear that although we have focused on certain topics in our evidenced Statement of Case, these are far from our only concerns. We wished to avoid duplication by leaving the arguments about highways and noise to Lancashire County Council, but we recognise these as extremely strong grounds for refusal.

Our primary concern is the dust and particulate matter that we believe will blight the occupants of homes and gardens, as so many properties are far too close to the proposed operations on this site.

Quarrying will inevitably produce dust, with a spectrum of particle sizes, from larger nuisance or disamenity dust to smaller particulate matter. The location of proposed sites must be a significant consideration to ensure they do not unfairly affect the enjoyment of people's properties or the health of those nearby.

Here, we have approximately 150 homes within 250 metres of the quarry site. Far too many people, far too close.

These residents are not just numbers. Many have pre-existing health conditions, some of which led them to settle in the countryside seeking clean air in the first place.

To understand the profile of the local population, the Preesall and Knott End Against the Quarry Group carried out a door-to-door survey of residents living within about a kilometre of the proposed site, early in the full application process. Our data showed disproportionate numbers of residents with serious health problems, including breathing and heart-related issues. This information was shared with Lancashire County Council's Director of Public Health, Dr Sakthi Karunanithi. He subsequently instructed, in January 2024, that the appellant should include in their Environmental Statement an analysis of human health impacts of dust and silica-rich particles. The assessment should take into account guidance from the Health and Safety Executive and the NHS, including other research into silica-related health impacts.

From what we have seen, the appellant has never adequately acknowledged or responded to the concerns Dr Karunanithi set out, despite his clear and reasonable request for proper assessments and information. We remain deeply concerned that

no work has been undertaken to assess the impact of particulate matter on our vulnerable residents, many of whom live extremely close to the site.

In a partial and dismissive response, the appellant quoted a single, discredited study to dismiss the link between particulate matter and health outcomes.

This is just one study, against a great weight of recent research showing a very real link between particulate matter pollution and ill health. We have referenced several of these in our Statement of Case.

It should be noted that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has warned Directors of Public Health that short-term exposure to particulate matter below target levels can still negatively impact human health. The American Lung Association has published similar conclusions.

Particulate matter has also been classified as a Group 1 carcinogen by the World Health Organisation since 2024.

Despite this growing body of evidence, and despite the clear challenges set out by LCC's Director of Public Health, the appellant has failed to conduct any assessment of the impacts on human health from this site, even for those living in the very closest proximity to the quarry workings.

Similar concerns were cited as a reason for refusal at appeal at Benego Quarry in Hertfordshire.

With regard to disamenity dust impacts on residences, the appellant originally stated in a submitted report that adverse effects from dust, following mitigation, would be negligible, an assertion that was never credible.

The Preesall and Knott End Against the Quarry Group commissioned our own professional opinion, which showed that the appellant reached these spurious results only by deviating from IAQM guidance and minimising dust impact figures to suit their needs.

This under-prediction was repeated in their revised Air Quality Document (December 2024). LCC's consultant, Atkins, also stated in March 2026 that the dust source, emissions, and pathway effectiveness were underestimated by the appellant.

Now, as part of this appeal process, the appellant has hired a new air quality expert who concedes that there will be an adverse effect on residents living in close proximity during certain phases of working, claiming this is a "slight adverse effect".

The appellant was previously content to pursue the application with a clearly flawed assessment, indicating they are not genuinely interested in understanding the impact or whether it is even possible to mitigate effectively at such proximity. This latest report appears to be a small concession intended to wave away a problem they cannot overcome.

Too many properties are cheek-by-jowl with this quarry site. Residents will have dust in their gardens and homes, washing dirtied by airborne particles before it can dry, and those with lung complaints will be deeply anxious about the health impacts they may suffer. The appellant has refused to commission any reasonable assessments to reassure local people.

The next issue, discussed in the Case Management Hearing, is the bridlepath running from the A588, Head Dyke Lane, along the entire length of the proposed quarry site. The appellant claims in their latest Regulation 25 submission that “there is no impact on the bridlepath”. The reality is that the only thing not impacted is its physical route.

As outlined in our written submissions, and supported by comments from the Chair of the Fylde Coast Bridleways Association and the British Horse Society document submitted, these completely refute the appellant’s claims and provide a full, clear, and truthful picture of the impact on horses and riders.

The British Horse Society document shows that the appellant has engaged in cherry-picking, creating a false impression that most horses and riders will be unaffected.

There is no attenuation or mitigation proposed for sight or sound issues coming from the quarry issues that could easily startle a horse and endanger its rider.

Instead, the bridlepath runs adjacent to the workings of Phase 3a, Phase 4, Phase 2, and part of Phase 1, with no protection or screening at all.

This development would render a much-loved and well-used bridlepath effectively unusable by the average equestrian, as most horses’ response to such activity so close to the path would be far more serious than a simple “spook”.

To quote from the same British Horse Society document cited by the appellant:

“Environments which are likely to produce noise should be avoided in the vicinity of routes used by equestrians, particularly byways, bridleways and minor roads which should be protected for quiet recreation and exercise.”

Our bridleway, and its users, should be afforded this protection.

Finally, I want to address flooding, which is a major source of anxiety in Preesall, especially in the area close to the proposed quarry site.

Although the Development Control Committee did not include flooding as one of their formal reasons for refusal, we feel it is appropriate to raise this on behalf of the local community, as this material planning consideration has not been adequately addressed at any stage.

There is a substantial recent history of flooding in the area of Sunnyside Terrace, where residents have experienced internal flooding of their homes and many near misses.

These properties require regular emergency intervention by Wyre Borough Council, who deploy pumps to prevent water entering homes. The Wyre Rivers Trust and Lancashire County Council have also been involved in managing this frightening situation.

Residents live on a knife-edge, responding to flood warnings and constantly monitoring the dykes and road during heavy rain. They experience great stress and anxiety and do not deserve to have their misery compounded by a development that has not taken sufficient steps to assess or prevent increased flood risk.

Part of the current strategy for protecting homes around Sunnyside involves proactively closing Lancaster Road to prevent bow waves pushing water into homes during high water. Imagine the chaos if Lancaster Road needed to be closed while HGVs were trying to enter or exit the quarry during a flood event. Has any thought been given to this? Not that we can see.

As highlighted in our written evidence, there are real concerns about the local drainage system. The appellant's claims that dykes are dry and able to take additional water are based on a survey carried out in September during dry weather. This does not reflect conditions for the rest of the year and contradicts the lived experience of residents.

Our experience is that the dyke systems are often running beyond capacity, exacerbated by a very shallow gradient and other issues. On the opposite side of Sunnyside Terrace, there is regular highway and land flooding, and there is generally insufficient capacity to take additional water flowing off the site without causing flooding elsewhere.

We are also concerned about the impact of removing well-draining sand and gravel and replacing it with inert infill and clay soils, which are likely to be far less

permeable and lead to increased runoff.

We have also referred to the refusal of planning permission for housing in a field opposite the proposed quarry entrance, due to concerns raised by Wyre Council and a Planning Inspector about flood safety. The Flood Risk Assessment for that proposal did not adequately mitigate risks or include an evacuation plan.

We have genuine concerns that without proper assessment, it may not be safe for workers on this site, in addition to the risks posed to the surrounding community.

The County Council has raised concerns through the Regulation 25 process, highlighting that inert waste infilling is not “water compatible”. We know the water table in our area is very high, and such infilling should not take place below the water table under Environment Agency policies due to contamination risks.

The appellant has not addressed these concerns beyond stating that the infill is necessary for the application to be viable. This does not inspire confidence.

The County Council also raised concerns about unclear land levels and a lack of detail on flood mitigation. As far as we can see, these concerns have been ignored.

The community has raised flooding concerns from the outset. Many objections were submitted to the County Council, including from local councillors. The County Council formally raised their own concerns through the Regulation 25 process. We are deeply worried that the appellant has not addressed these concerns or commissioned further work to assess the flood risks posed by their proposal.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to set out the concerns of the local community, who are overwhelmingly opposed to this quarry and have serious concerns about the roads and noise, the focus of the County Council, and about dust, public rights of way, and flooding, which we have set out here.

Please take into account the impact this will have on our village and give due weight to the objections we have raised.