STATEMENT OF LOCAL ENGAGEMENT

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR A CONSERVATION STONE QUARRY TO EXTRACT BLISWORTH LIMESTONE BLOCKSTONE, FLAGSTONE AND LARGE WALLING STONE

STONEPITS QUARRY, BENEFIELD, OUNDLE, PE8 5AN

CHURCHFIELD STONE LTD

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Version 1
Final
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1 THE NEED FOR CONSULTATION

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 In support of a Planning Application for a Building Stone Quarry to extract Blisworth Limestone (Oundle Variety) Blockstone, Flagstone and Large Walling Stone, this document sets out the measures taken to engage the relevant stakeholders in the proposals for extraction activities at Stonepits Quarry, Benefield, Oundle.

1.1.2 Churchfield Stone Ltd instructed GP Planning Ltd to undertake the required community and statutory consultation process through a series of consultation means and methods. This Statement of Local Engagement sets out how the local community and statutory stakeholders have been involved in the process of Environmental Impact Assessment and preparation of the planning application for Stonepits Quarry, Benefield.

1.1.3 The application site is located between the villages of Upper and Lower Benefield, near the A427, to the west of Oundle, Northamptonshire. The application site is within the landholding of the Biggin and Benefield Estate.

1.2 The Need for Consultation

1.2.1 The Localism Bill was given Royal Assent on 15th November 2011, becoming an Act of Parliament. The Bill has been designed to devolve greater powers to councils and neighbourhoods and given local communities more control over planning decisions. This Act brings the local community to the forefront in the planning system.

1.2.2 A key component of the Northamptonshire’s Mineral and Waste Development Framework is the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which was originally adopted in June 2006. Since then, a partial review of the SCI has been undertaken and a revised SCI was adopted by Cabinet on 13th November 2012. The SCI sets out the required scope of consultation that needs to be undertaken with regard to each development. The extent of consultation that needs to be undertaken is linked to the scale of the development. These parameters are stated within the SCI. For minerals related applications, the parameters for formal consultation to be undertaken with the community are linked to the size of the area covered by the mineral operation.

1.2.3 Mineral applications that cover an area larger than 2ha in size are classed as a ‘significant proposal/application’. For significant proposals, section 4.9 of the SCI states that:

Developers/applicants will need to submit with their planning application a ‘Statement of Local Engagement’ showing how they have engaged the community in their proposals and how it has changed as a consequence.
2 CONSULTATION STRATEGY

2.1 Nature of the Proposed Development

2.1.1 The planning application is for:
- Extraction of Blisworth Limestone (Blockstone, Flagstone and Large Walling Stone) from the working area;
- Restoration of the working area to allow for the return to agriculture;
- Creation of a new haul road and junction with the A427; and
- Ancillary works, including screening bunds, wheelwash, weighbridge, parking and storage area, site office and mess facilities.

2.2 Consultation Methods

2.2.1 During the process of preparing plans for the site, the development partners and consultants formulated a list of likely interested parties, derived from a combination of assessment of sensitive receptors, local representatives and statutory/formal bodies with a likely interest in particular aspects of the proposed mineral extraction. This included the following:
- Northamptonshire County Council Planning Department
- East Northamptonshire Council Planning Department
- East Northamptonshire Council Environmental Protection Officer
- Environment Agency
- Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust
- Highways Agency
- Natural England
- Benefield Parish Council
- Local Residents

2.2.2 A range of consultation methods have been employed to engaged with the interested parties. Consultation has been carried out principally through face to face meetings (including a public consultation event), followed up by letter, phone call and email circulation of progress, changes and answers to particular questions.

2.2.3 Throughout the consultation process, the development team continued to engage proactively with the local community to discuss the detail of the proposed mineral extraction and to work with local stakeholders prior to the submission of any application. In order to ensure that consistent information was provided, letters, leaflets and posters were distributed around the community that together with easily readable plans and diagrams explain proposals in a clear and straightforward manner.

2.2.4 Further detail is provided in Section 3 to explain the range of consultation events and the use of these consultation methods in practice.
3 CONSULTATION EVENTS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 A range of consultation events were held during 2012. These events included both community consultation and engagement with statutory consultees. These events are detailed further below.

3.2 Community Consultation

Meetings with Benefield Parish Council

3.2.1 GP Planning Ltd attended a Parish Council meeting with Benefield Parish Council at the Benefield Village Hall, Benefield on the 19th March 2012. This meeting provided an opportunity to introduce the Stonepits Quarry development to members of the Parish Council (as representatives of the local community). Information was provided on the site location, likely components of the development (i.e. a project description) and as well as an indication of expected yearly output and site operations. Minutes of this meeting and a copy of the information provided is contained in Appendix 1.

3.2.2 Subsequently, at a meeting held on 14th May 2012 the Parish Council agreed to provide information to the local residents about the proposals. A copy of the information drop is included in Appendix 1.

3.2.3 Following this, another meeting was arranged with Benefield Parish Council in the Benefield Village Hall for 9th July 2012. This provided an opportunity to update the members of the Parish Council on the proposed development since the introductory meeting on 19th March 2012. This meeting also provided the opportunity for Parish Councillors to ask any questions and raise any concerns which they may have at this time.

Public Advertisements, Press, Media

3.2.4 A public advertisement was placed in the Nene Valley News on the 9th June 2012 which invited members of the public to register an interest with GP Planning Ltd and therefore, request to be included on a mailing list to receive details of future events or further information. The advertisement is included in Appendix 2 of this document.

3.2.5 Nene Valley News was again used for a public advertisement on the 21st July 2012 which detailed the arrangements for a public consultation event at the Benefield Village Hall on 25th July 2012. The advert informed the public that this event would include information boards, plans of the proposed quarry and informal discussions with the project team, headed by GP Planning Ltd. In addition to this, posters were displayed around the villages of Upper and Lower Benefield detailing the arrangements of the event, as well as information leaflets and invitation letters being distributed to each household within Upper and Lower Benefield. The information relating to the public consultation event is attached in Appendix 3.

3.2.6 Benefield Parish Council approached BBC Radio Northampton on the 2nd August 2012 in relation to the proposal. GP Planning Ltd, acting on behalf of the client Churchfield Stone Ltd were asked by BBC Radio Northampton to provide information regarding the proposed development.
A press release was issued to BBC Radio Northampton, which is attached in Appendix 2. Radio coverage was aired on 3rd August 2012.

Public Consultation Event

3.2.7 A public consultation event was held at Benefield Village Hall, Benefield on the 25th July 2012. The event was open to the public from 3.00pm – 8.00pm.

3.2.8 Information boards were erected within the Benefield Village Hall in order to initiate discussion with the consultees. Seven information boards set out an:

- Overview to the project
- The need for the development
- The proposed site layout
- Access arrangements
- Landscape and Visual Amenity
- Operational Process
- The Planning Process

3.2.9 In addition, stone samples were provided along with an overhead projector showing further drawings illustrating the proposed development.

3.2.10 The informal approach to consultation allowed for the discussion to develop without the bounds of a set structure. It was intended that consultees would be able to raise any point of interest that they had in respect to the proposed development, and freely instigate discussion on those points of interest with representatives of the project team. Staff from GP Planning Ltd, Vista Landscape Studio and Churchfield Stone Ltd were on hand to speak directly with visitors.

3.2.11 86 people attended the event during 3.00pm – 8.00pm. The split of attendees are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residents</th>
<th>Number Attended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper Benefield</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Benefield</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>86</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.12 At the event, visitors had the opportunity to leave written comments, those left include the following:

1. If this project is passed by planning, what will the benefits be for the community of upper and lower Benefield?
2. In which year was the quarry last worked?
3. Will the quarry workings be illuminated at night? If so, why?
4. How many jobs will be created that villagers can apply for?
5. What traffic calming measures will be put in place to mitigate the risk of cars overtaking slow Lorries through the villages?
6. If the stone seam runs all along the valley, what is the necessity to put the quarry where it is proposed - move it along the valley to “diminish” the impact on the villages.
7. **What guarantees are there that the quarry will not be used for future landfill?**

3.2.13 During the event, those in attendance were offered the opportunity to receive further contact personally from the development team in regards to the progress of the project, 28 people provided contact details to avail of additional information.

3.2.14 At the public consultation event a register of visitors was taken, and visitors were asked to indicate if they would be interested in attending a visit to the Harley Way Stone Processing Plant to view the operations of the plant and to see how the proposed extracted stone would cropped and dressed. This event was held on 26th September 2012 and information relating to the visit is attached in Appendix 3. From this a total of 18 registered their interest to take part in this visit, however there were no attendees at the visit.

3.2.15 The information that was displayed at the public consultation event was made available for public viewing at the PGR Group offices situated at the Nene Valley Business Park, Oundle.

3.2.16 The information presented at the event is attached in Appendix 3.

3.3 **Statutory Consultation**

**Public Consultation Event**

3.3.1 Invitations to the public consultation event were extended to a range of statutory consultees, including:

- East Northamptonshire District Council Planning Authority
- East Northamptonshire District Council Environmental Health Department
- Northamptonshire County Council Highways Authority
- Northamptonshire County Council Environmental Planning
- Environment Agency
- Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust
- Natural England
- English Heritage
- Local Councillors
- Rockingham Forest Trust

3.3.2 Those statutory consultees that attended included:

- Northamptonshire County Council Planning Officer
- Northamptonshire County Council Environmental Planner
- East Northamptonshire Environmental Health Officer

**EIA Scoping Opinion**

3.3.3 An Environmental Impact Scoping Request was submitted to the Northamptonshire County Council on the 11th July 2012 and made a formal request to Mineral Planning Authority to come to a decision on the scope of work that should be assessed as a part of the Environmental Statement for the development. A number of statutory consultees were asked to provide their response to the information submitted. These included:

- East Northamptonshire District Council Planning Authority
- East Northamptonshire District Council Environmental Health Department
- Northamptonshire County Council Highways Authority
- Northamptonshire County Council Environmental Planning
• Environment Agency
• Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust
• Natural England
• English Heritage

3.3.4 Therefore, the scope of work undertaken in association with the Environmental Impact Assessment and information included in the planning application was approved by the statutory consultees.

3.3.5 In addition, in response to the Scoping Opinion 44 letters of objection to the proposed development were sent by the residents of Upper and Lower Benefield to Northamptonshire County Council.

3.3.6 The objections raised have been considered and summarised. The objections are from a range of local resident. Whilst a number of the letters just stated an outright objection to the proposals, there were a number of letters that set out specific areas of concern that had led them to object to the proposals.

3.3.7 In general most of the objections were based around concerns about noise, dust, highway safety, general vehicle movements, impact on the public footpath network, and impact on the visual and landscape setting.

3.3.8 The areas that need to be addressed further in response to these objections are linked to vibration from vehicle movements and the impact of the vibration on the Listed Buildings that line the A427 in both Upper and Lower Benefield.

3.3.9 The location of the two sink holes at the bottom of the valley have been highlighted as a cause for concern. Their impact upon the proposed extraction activities needs to be assessed.

3.3.10 In addition, numerous residents queried the need for the development and the uniqueness of the stone that will be extracted from the quarry. It was a general opinion that the stone is not of a sufficient level of difference to the stone that is to be extracted from the quarry at Harley Way to justify quarrying in this area.

**Other**

3.3.11 Other consultation with statutory consultees included a Pre Application discussion with Northamptonshire County Council and direct consultation with the Highways Authority.
4 CONSIDERATION OF CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

4.1 Outcomes

4.1.1 As a result of the varied and extensive consultation programme, a number of areas were identified as being of particular concern to the local residents. They are:
- The impact upon Visual Amenity particularly on dwellings in Lower Benefield
- The impact of the Heavy Goods Vehicles, generated by the development, on Upper and Lower Benefield when using the A427
- The impact of the development on highway safety due to the location of the site access
- The impact of the development upon local noise amenity
- The security of the site and the visual impact of the site security infrastructure
- The need for the development and the reason for its location in the vicinity of Upper and Lower Benefield
- The impact of dust emissions from the development
- The impact of the development on the sink hole situated in the vicinity of the proposed development
- The impact of development on safety of users of the countryside
- The potential for future extensions to the quarry operations

4.1.2 The concerns that were raised have been considered within the Planning Application and Environmental Statement. The following sections address each area in turn, setting out how the issues have been considered and how the development has subsequently changed on the basis of the consultation response.

4.2 Consideration of Outcomes

Impact upon Visual Amenity

4.2.1 A number of residents located on Causin Way, Lower Benefield and those south facing along the A427 in Upper Benefield, raised concern about the impact of the development on their visual amenity. The consensus opinion from local residents was that the development would have a detrimental impact on their enjoyment of views across the valley. Residents noted that they would not wish the ancillary infrastructure associated with the daily operation of the quarry to have a detrimental impact on views.

Assessment and Changes to the Development

4.2.2 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (See Appendix 9 of the Environmental Statement) has been undertaken to assess the potential impacts of the development on the landscape and visual amenity. In response to the concerns raised by the local residents an additional representative viewpoint was included in the assessment. This viewpoint is located on a permissive footpath south of Upper Benefield and north of the application site.

4.2.3 Furthermore, a range of mitigation measures have been included. A tree belt will be planted along the north-eastern boundary of the site. Additionally, further planting tree planting within existing perimeter hedgerows has been incorporated.

4.2.4 In response to concerns from residents in Lower Benefield, a shrub, tree and grassland belt has been developed along the southern boundary of haul road.
4.2.5 It was also considered that the overburden mound on the southern boundary of the extraction area should be constructed to 8m to mitigate views from the south. The overburden mound will be grass seeded.

**Impact of Heavy Goods Vehicles**

4.2.6 There were a number of questions concerning the impact that the Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) will have on the noise and vibration amenity of the dwellings along Upper and Lower Benefield.

4.2.7 In the written letters of objection to Northamptonshire County Council, several had made specific reference to vibrations caused from vehicle movements and the impact of the vibration on the Listed Buildings that line the A427 in both Upper and Lower Benefield.

**Assessment and Changes to the Development**

4.2.8 To address the concern around noise and vibration from HGV movements, further assessment of the development was undertaken in the Noise Assessment. Using information gathered from the site traffic surveys and national guidance the potential impact was considered. The results of the investigations showed that there would be no increase in noise and vibration in relation to the HGV movements generated by the development.

**Location of Site Access**

4.2.9 Queries were raised from a number of local residents regarding the location of the site access to the proposed Stonepit Quarry. They voiced concerns primarily on the location of the site access which was described as being located ‘on a blind corner and in the middle of a series of bends on a steep road’. Residents felt that slow moving Heavy Goods Vehicles on this section of the A427 had potential to contribute to an increase in road traffic accidents. The local residents cited that there had been a number of accidents on this stretch of road recently.

**Assessment and Changes to the Development**

4.2.10 Initial engagement with the Highways Authority on the issues of preserving the safety of road users within Benefield and also restrictions on HGV movements in and around Stonepits Quarry has been undertaken. In addition, advice provided by the Highways Authority during the EIA Scoping process has been incorporated into the design of the development. The site access has been designed so that there are appropriate visual splays to ensure the safe access and egress to and from the site.

4.2.11 The Highways Authority have also recommended that appropriate gradients are incorporated in the access design.

**Impact on Local Noise Amenity**

4.2.12 There was concern raised about the potential for the development to have an adverse impact on local noise amenity. A Noise Assessment had been undertaken prior to the consultation event and confirmed that the development can be undertaken within environmentally acceptable limits.

**Assessment and Changes to the Development**
4.2.13 On the basis of the concerns raised, the Noise Assessment considered further mitigation measures to be incorporated into the development. The stone cropping activities will be housed in 3 sided sheds and will be placed in the bottom of the extraction area to reduce noise impact. Quarry plant will be operated with white noise reversing bleepers to minimise noise emissions.

**Safety and Security**

4.2.14 The location of the quarry between the Upper and Lower Benefield and in proximity to the public footpath network prompted questions regarding the safety of local residents when using local facilities.

4.2.15 Attendees at the public consultation event were informed of the proposals to install security gates at the entrance to the extraction area and also the proposals to erect gates and fencing at the point where the existing footpaths will be crossed by the haul road.

4.2.16 In addition, the Applicant explained how they were duty bound to ensure that the site was made secure under the Quarry Regulations 1999 to ensure that no unauthorised access can be gained into the quarry.

**Assessment and Changes to the Development**

4.2.17 The concern raised from the local residents was considered. The opportunity was identified to enhance hedgerow planting around the application field perimeter, to ensure secure boundaries.

4.2.18 In addition, it is noted that appropriate signage will be installed to inform users of the local footpath network of the activities taking place. Due to the proposed seasonal working of the site, the Applicant can undertake to inform local residents of when operations will commence and cease. This could be undertaken through a Quarry Liaison Group, email notifications or regular updates on a website, for example.

**Future Extension of Site for Quarrying**

4.2.19 A number of residents had expressed a concern that if a demand for this Blisworth Limestone exceeded supply then what assurances would be made to ensure that Stonepit Quarry was not extended beyond the site area which has been detailed in this application.

**Assessment and Changes to the Development**

4.2.20 Churchfield Stone Ltd informed those present at the public consultation event that there are currently no plans in place to further extend the development of Stonepits Quarry. The future of Stonepits Quarry is ultimately subject to market demand for Blisworth Limestone and also availability of such minerals.

4.2.21 This application solely relates to the area of land as identified in drawing GPP/CSL/BE/12/02 Site Plan.

**The Need for the Development**
4.2.22 Residents had queried the need for the extraction of Blisworth Limestone. It was felt by some that there were suitable alternatives which could be used for new building, conservation and repair.

Assessment and Changes to the Development;

4.2.23 An independent report was produced on the heritage value of the Oundle Variety of the Blisworth Limestone. The report is attached in Appendix 11 of the Environmental Statement.

Impact from Dust Emissions

4.2.24 The potential for adverse dust impact from the development was queried in the public consultation event. Additionally, a Dust Assessment was requested by East Northamptonshire County Council.

Assessment and Changes to the Development

4.2.25 A Dust Assessment was undertaken to assess the proposed development and this confirmed that an unmitigated development would have a near zero potential to cause an adverse dust impact on the two villages. However, to further reduce this potential, a comprehensive list of mitigation measures that require the installation of specific infrastructure and the adoption of operational practices have been incorporated into the design of the development.

4.2.26 The scope of work of the Dust Assessment was widened on the basis of the concern for dust emissions from the vehicles servicing the site. The assessment confirmed that there will be no impact on local air quality standards in relation to the operations associated with the quarry.

Sink Holes

4.2.27 Concern was raised by the local residents for the potential of the development to have an adverse impact on the physical characteristics of the proximate Sink Holes.

Assessment and Changes to the Development

4.2.28 The potential impact of the proposed extraction activities on the nearby sink holes has been considered within the Hydrological and Hydrogeological Risk Assessment (HRA) which is attached in Appendix 7 of the Environmental Statement. The sink holes are approximately 200m to the south-west of the quarry perimeter. The HRA confirms that there will be no impact upon hydrological or hydrogeological features outside of the site perimeter.
5 SUMMARY

5.1.1 A comprehensive programme of local engagement was carried out with all stakeholders with an interest in the proposed development, including statutory bodies, elected representatives and local residents. There was an on-going process of communication where appropriate, with feedback on the consultation and resulting changes being made by the developer and further inputs then received and made use of where appropriate.

5.1.2 Consultation took various forms as appropriate to the audience, ranging from presentations, meetings, workshops, site meetings, and correspondence by letter, telephone and email.

5.1.3 The various consultation events were successful in providing the vehicle for enabling stakeholders to contribute to the development process. The public consultation event enabled stakeholders to voice any concerns which they had to those steering the project and where questions arose they were answered. Also, the event enabled active discussion that evoked further questions and research to be undertaken by the development team to ensure that all concerns and queries have been dealt with appropriately.
APPENDIX 1: BENEFIELD PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS
Stonepits Quarry, Benefield

Benefield Parish Council Meeting 19/03/12

The Project Description
The conservation stone quarry will be operated by Churchfield Stone Ltd to produce Blisworth Limestone Blockstone, Flagstone and Walling Stone.

- The total mineral reserve is approximately 169,950 tonnes.
- The amount of mineral that will be transported offsite for further processing and sale is 119,000 tonnes.
- Of the 119,000 tonnes taken offsite; 68,000 tonnes will be processed at the Harley Way Stone Processing Plant operated by Churchfield Stone Ltd.
- The remaining 51,000 tonnes will be exported for sale as hand processed walling stone.
- The yearly output of stone will be between 3,000 to 4,000 tonnes of blockstone and flagstone and approximately 3,000 tonnes of walling stone.
- The lifespan of the quarry will be up to 17 years.
- The site will be restored to similar to existing levels to be returned to agriculture.
- There project will consist of the construction of a haul road, soil bunds, site mess facilities, a wheel wash and a weighbridge.

Blockstone: material suitable for ashlar strings, sills, lintels, mullions and general fenestration.
Flagstone: suitable for use as a paving and internal and external flooring stone.
Walling stone: suitable to use within construction and dry-stone walling (6 inch variety).

The Site
The site is situated at the bottom of the valley between Upper and Lower Benefield, and is currently an arable field. The main site area is approximately 9 hectares in size with the excavation area at approximately 2.3 hectares.

Access to the quarry will be taken off the A427, with a haul road constructed between the access and the main excavation site.

Timescales
The application is currently being formulated. It is anticipated that the application will be submitted during summer 2012.

A consultation event will be held prior to the submission of the application, and will be open to local residents, local business, the Parish Council, and statutory consultees.

Contact Details
The formulation of the planning application is being managed by GP Planning Ltd. If you have any queries regarding the project please do get in contact with us.

The contact details for the team members that will be heading the project are set out below.

Project Manager: Lucy Booth (lucy@gpplanning.co.uk)
Planning Consultant: Nathan Maddox (nathan@gpplanning.co.uk)
Office phone number: (01604) 771123
Benefield Parish Council
Minutes of Proceedings

A meeting was held on Monday 19th March 2012 in the Village Hall starting at 7.00pm.

1. Present
Councillors A R Pridmore (Chairman), J R T Dawson, Miss T L Watts-Russell, M T F Berridge, R Andrews, R C Keys; The Clerk: M r C B Jones; Major J Watts-Russell and Three from GP Planning Ltd.

2. Apologies
Apologies were received from Cllr Shatford.

3. Declarations of Interest
None.

4. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on Monday 23.01.12
These, having been e.mailed to Council, were agreed as a true record, then signed by the Chairman.

5. Matters Arising as per the Agenda:-

6. Stonepit Quarry, Benefield
Major Watts-Russell thanked the Council for allowing him to outline the project which is summarised below:-

6.1. The Project Description:-

The conservation stone quarry will be operated by Churchfield Stone Ltd to produce Blisworth Limestone Blockstone, Flagstone and Walling Stone.

6.1.1. The total mineral reserve is approximately 169,950 tonnes.
6.1.2. The amount of mineral which will be transported offsite for further processing and sale is 119,000 tonnes.
6.1.3. Of the 119,000 tonnes taken offsite 68,000 tonnes will be processed at the Harley Way Stone Processing Plant operated by Churchfield Stone, Ltd.
6.1.4. The remaining 51,000 tonnes will be exported for sale as hand processed walling stone.
6.1.5. The yearly output of stone will be between 3,000 to 4,000 tonnes of blockstone and flagstone and approximately 3,000 tonnes of walling stone.
6.1.6. The lifespan of the quarry will be up to 17 years.
6.1.7. The site will be restored to similar to existing levels to be returned to agriculture.
6.1.8. There project will consist of the construction of a haul road, soil bunds, site meso facilities, a wheel wash and a weighbridge.

6.2. Blockstone: material suitable for ashlar strings, sills, lintels, mullions and general fenestration. Flagstone: suitable for use as a paving and internal and external flooring stone. Walling Stone: suitable to use within construction and dry-stone walling (6 inch variety).

6.3. The Site

6.3.1. The site is situated at the bottom of the valley between Upper and Lower Benefield and is currently an arable field. The main site area is approximately 9 hectares in size with the excavation area at approximately 2.3 hectares.
6.3.2. Access to the quarry will be taken off the A427. with a haul road constructed between the access and the main excavation site.

(233/12)
6.4. Timescales
6.4.1. The application is currently being formulated. It is anticipated that the application will be submitted during summer 2012.
6.4.2. A consultation event will be held prior to the submission of the application, and will be open to local residents, local business, the Parish Council, and statutory consultees.

6.5. Contact Details
The formulation of the planning application is being managed by GP Planning Ltd. If you have any queries regarding the project please do get in contact with them.

The contact details for the team members that will be heading the project are set out below:-

Project Manager: Lucy Booth (lucy@gpplanning.co.uk)
Planning Consultant: Nathan Maddox (nathan@gpplanning.co.uk)
Office Phone Number: 01604 771123

We would pursue when we are asked to comment when the plan is issued.

7. Public Footpaths, Trees, Hedges, Fences, Walls, etc.
Nothing to report.

8. Highways, Highway Paths and Verges, Highway Services
8.1. Streetlights:-
We had complained of the dirty state of the bowls. Pursue.
8.2. Highway Footpath North Side of A427:-
Needs to be sided out. Pursue.
8.3. A427 Upper Benefield to Lower Benefield – Chevron Sign – Damaged:-
Now repaired.

9. Planning
9.1. Oundle 2020:-
There is a further meeting on the 26th March 2012.
9.2. EN/11/01637/LBC ) The Cottage, Lyveden New Bield – Alterations to Listed Building
EN/11/01638/FUL ) Now EN/12/00372/LBC
BPC Comments:-For: 4, Against: 1, Abstention: 2.
Await ENC Decision.
9.3. 12/00135/NCC Establishment of a Conservation Stone Quarry to Extract Blisworth Limestone at Churchfield Stone Quarry, Harley Way - We awaited notification of outcome of Development Control Committee meeting Thursday 01.03.12.

10. Village Hall
A questionnaire is being circulated in an attempt to counteract the effect of events not being well attended, although the Hall has been considerably renovated to give a more welcoming impression as you enter the Hall. It was agreed we award a grant of £500 to help with running expenses.

11. Neighbourhood Watch
The Northants Police Parish Crime Report (01.03.12) shows for Lower Benefield crime was as follows:-
Sep 11 to Oct 11: Criminal Damage: 1, Theft of Motor Vehicles: 1, Total: 2. For Upper Benefield Jun 11- Feb 12: Burglary Other: 2, Criminal Damage: 1, Theft from Motor Vehicles: 1, Theft Handling: 1, Total: 5.

12. General
12.1. War Memorial:-
The Conservation Officer, War Memorials Trust, 42a Buckingham Palace Rd, London, SW1 0RE indicated they could not give a grant as no maintenance work had been carried out since 2005. (234/12)
They recommended cleaning with water, bushing and not re-cutting of letters.
Cllr Andrews was to ask WREN for a grant for renovation. If this was not forthcoming we would try to raise the funding ourselves.

12.2. NCC Libraries:-
To open on Sundays.
12.3. Tidy Village Competition:-
No action.

13. Finance
13.1. Receipts and Payments Account 01.04.11 to 31.03.12 (Book):-
Agreed and signed by Chairman and Clerk.
13.2. Receipts and Payments Account (Auditors):-
Agreed and Signed by Chairman and Clerk.
13.3. USAAF 401st Bombardment Group H:-
13.4. Payments agreed were:-
13.4.1. Benefield Village Hall Committee – Grant...............................................................£500.00
13.4.2. Clerk’s Salary 01.04.11 to 31.03.12 less Income Tax – Mr C B Jones.................. 680.00
13.4.3. Clerk’s Salary 01.04.11 to 31.03.12 Income Tax from Clerk’s Salary.................... 170.00
to HM Revenue & Customs................................................................................................. 170.00
13.4.4. Clerk’s Expenses 01.04.11 to 31.03.12 - Mr C B Jones........................................... 463.76

14. Date of Next Meeting:-
Monday 14th May 2012 – Annual Meeting followed by Annual Parish Meeting followed by Ordinary Meeting – in the Village Hall starting at 7.00 pm.

15. Closure of Meeting
The meeting closed at 8.00 pm

Signed..........................................................(Chairman) Date..................................................
(235/12)
Benefield Parish Council

Minutes of Proceedings

An Ordinary Meeting was held on Monday 14th May 2012 in the Village Hall after the Annual Meeting and Annual Parish Meeting.

1. Present
Councillors G R Shatford (Chairman), Miss T L Watts – Russell, R C Keys, R Andrews, A R Pridmore, M T P Berridge; Mr C B Jones (Clerk).

2. Apologies
Apologies were received from Cllr J R T Dawson.

3. Declarations of Interest
Cllr Berridge declared an interest in item 7.6 on the Agenda.

4. Minutes of the Last Ordinary Meeting (Monday 19.03.12)
These, having been previously e.mailed, were agreed as a true record, then signed by the Chairman.

5. Matters Arising as per the Agenda:-

6. Public Footpaths, Trees, Hedges, Fences, Walls, etc
Nothing.

7. Highways, Highway Services
7.1. Streetlight Bowls:-
These will not be cleaned as new components covering new legislation are required and will be fitted to order.

7.2. Upper Benefield – A427 Highway Verges and Footpaths sidings out has not been done through the Enhancement Gang Programme.

8. Planning
8.1. Oundle 2020:-
Ongoing – Further meetings are due to take place where villages are invited.

8.2. Windfarm at Sudbororough:-
Ongoing – endeavours are being made to overturn the recent successful appeal against the initial refusal.

8.3. Stonepit Quarry – It was agreed an information drop be prepared, this to be presented to the full Parish Council for comment and approval before circulating.

8.4. EN/11/01637/LBC (The Cottage, Lyveden New Bield – Alterations to Listed Building)

8.5. EN/11/01638/FUL)

8.6. 12/00135/NCC Conservation Stone Quarry – Churchfield Stone Quarry, Harley Way. – Permitted

8.7. EN/12/00512/FUL – 31A Main St, Upper Benefield – Car Port – Await ENC Decision.


9. Village Hall
The Village Hall Committee are endeavouring to address the problem of lack of interest in events organised for the Village.

10. Neighbourhood Watch
The Northants Police Parish Crime Report figures dated 01.04.12 were as those given as at 01.03.12.

238/12
11. General
11.1. War Memorial:-
We needed to speak to the County Conservation Officer to see if re-cutting the letters would be allowed.

12. Finance
12.1. Audit 2011/2012:-
The External Audit is to be on 9th July 2012 the date from which local electors and their representatives may question the Auditors about the Accounts or make objections to the Accounts or any item in them until the Audit has been completed.
The Books and Accounts may be seen between 06.06.12 and 03.07.12 at any reasonable time by contacting the Clerk.

12.2. Local Councils in England Annual Return for the Year Ended 31.03.12:-
12.2.1. Section 1 Accounting Statements for Benefield Parish Council:-
Agreed and signed by the Chairman and Clerk.
12.2.2. Section 2 Annual Governance Statement:-
Agreed and signed by the Chairman and Clerk.
12.2.3. Annual Audit Report:-
This had to be notified to Council by the Internal Auditor but did not need signature.
12.2.4. Bank Reconciliation:-
This was agreed then signed by the Chairman and Clerk.
The Form could now be remitted to the External Auditor.

12.3. Receipts Reported were:-
12.3.1. Precept 2012/13 1st of 2 Instalments ...........................................................£3,000.00
12.3.2. VAT Reclaimed 2011/12 ........................................................................... 131.83

12.4. Payments Agreed were:-
12.4.1. Streetlighting Energy – Qtr to 31.03.12 – E.on ........................................... 205.08
12.4.2. Streetlighting Maintenance – Qtr to 31.03.12 – E.on Sustainable Energy ......... 102.84
12.4.3. Northants County Association of Local Councils:-
12.4.3.1. Subscription 2012/2013 ........................................................................ 111.86
12.4.3.2. Internal Audit Year 2012/13 .................................................................... 80.00
12.4.4. Parish Council Insurance w.e.f. 01.06.12 – Aviva ........................................ 1,151.52

13. The Clerk
The Parish Council has been registered as an employer with Her Majesty’s Revenue & Customs.
A system of PAYE is being set up so that payments from the Parish Council being the income tax deducted from the Clerk’s Salary can be paid to HMRC.
The Clerk is preparing a Contract of Employment and Terms of Reference which will be submitted to the Parish Council for consideration and approval. The Clerk’s Salary due for review as per Standing Orders No 22.3. has been deferred.

14. Date of Next Meeting
Monday 9th July 2012 in the Village Hall starting at 7.00pm.

Signed ........................................ (Chairman) Date ........................................

239/12
Benefield Quarry Planning Application

At a recent Parish Council meeting, Julian Watts-Russell presented an outline plan to reopen an old quarry situated between the villages of Upper and Lower Benefield. His intention is to seek full planning permission to extract approx. 170,000 tonnes of stone over the next 17 years. (In terms of volume, this amount would be roughly equivalent to the space taken up by 17,000 average, fully loaded, 20-tonne lorries.) The site extends to some 9 hectares, with the excavation site being about 2.5 hectares (about the size of 5 full-sized football pitches).

The planned access to the quarry would be along the valley between the two villages (along the spinney) and out onto the A427. (See map detailing the existing quarry site and the proposed new road to, and from it.)

If the application is approved, 68,000 tonnes of stone from the site would be processed at the Harley Way processing plant (road to Lyveden from Dundle). The remaining of the stone would be used for walling stone. 200 tonne lorries would be used to move the stone. Every lorry making a collection will go through Upper or Lower Benefield twice (to and from the site). This traffic volume will be doubled when lorries return to backfill the excavated site.

The Watts-Russell Estate has employed an external consultancy to assist them in getting this proposal approved. At the initial meeting, these consultants made the following points:
- The limestone they are looking to mine is currently below the water table, so extraction will not be dusty.
- Mining would only take place on days with good weather.

It is the opinion of the councillors below, that if this project gets approval, this would be a disaster for both villages. This project provides no benefit to the villages of Upper and Lower Benefield and approx. 180 houses would be affected by this project. In the case of Upper Benefield, some of the houses would be as close as 370 metres to the excavation. For Lower Benefield, the prevailing wind (SW) would bring dust particles and noise straight into the village. We also believe that with the recent approval of the Harley Way Quarry application, this additional site (if approved) would lead to an unacceptable level of heavy vehicles being directed through the Benefields, and around the historic area of Lyvedon New Field.

We believe that, if approved, this project will have a dramatic impact on the enjoyment of living in this beautiful, un-spoilt part of rural England. The development will leave an ugly scar on the landscape between the 2 villages for the next 17 years. We also believe that there are a number of material considerations that need to be reviewed with this application:

- Increase in slow moving, heavy traffic through the villages
- Significant dust particle pollution
- Significant noise pollution both from the site and from the lorries servicing the site
- Ecology and habitats eroded
- Impact on existing footpaths that would be crossed by the proposed new road
- Impact on road safety - both on the exit of the site and at the turning onto Harley Way (road to Lyveden from Dundle)
- Overall landscape significance (Rockingham Forest Area) - Benefield and Lyveden.

It is our intention to fight this proposal on your behalf. In order to do this, we need your support. Please sign the survey below and return to any of the signatories. As more information becomes available, we will keep you up to date. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Please note. All replies will only be used with local planners to demonstrate the views of the villages. No information will be disclosed to either the Applicant, or any other party acting on the Applicant’s behalf.

Name ______________________________ Email ______________________________

I am against the proposed re-opening of the quarry ____________________________

I am for the proposed re-opening of the quarry ____________________________

Signed ____________________________

Other reasons (not detailed above) for or against ____________________________________
Councillor R. Andrews
Manor House
Lower Benefield
Peterborough
PE8 5AF

Dear Councillor Andrews,

Stonepits Quarry, Benefield

I write on behalf of Major Watts-Russell in our role as project managers and in reference to your recent correspondence with him regarding the proposal to re-establish a conservation stone quarry between Upper and Lower Benefield. In response to the introductory presentation that was made to Benefield Parish Council on Monday 19th March 2012, we understand that concerns about the detail of the quarry have been raised by the Parish Council and shared with the local community.

It has always been our intention to engage proactively with the local community to discuss the detail of the quarry and to work with local stakeholders prior to the submission of any planning application. Our concern is that there are details of the proposed quarry that have been misrepresented in the correspondence that has been distributed amongst the residents of the two villages. In order to ensure that consistent information is presented to the Parish Council and the local community we have been in contact with Mr Jones the Clerk to Benfield Parish Council to arrange a meeting to advance the consultation process.

It is our intention to be open and approachable so that constructive discussions may arise in order to ensure that the design of the quarry is sensitive to the needs of all stakeholders, particularly the local residents. In line with your request we would welcome a meeting to discuss the project and any feedback from the local community. My colleagues and I would be happy to meet with you at a routine or specially arranged Parish Council meeting. If you can please provide an indication of how you would like to proceed and any suitable dates it will be greatly appreciated.

I look forward to hearing from you on the matter,

Yours sincerely

Lucy Booth
Associate

CC
Major J. Watts-Russell, Mr P. Robinson, Cllr G. Shatford
APPENDIX 2: NEWS ADVERTISEMENTS AND PRESS RELEASES
Welcome to the world of geocaching

Residents of and visitors to East Northamptonshire might be surprised to know that several treasure troves are hidden here and can be found by anyone with a GPS receiver (Global Positioning System) and a spare hour or two to hunt them down.

Geocaching is often described as a high tech treasure hunt - participants log on to a website (such as www.geocaching.com) where they can retrieve coordinates (given in Latitude & Longitude format) and clues which will then help them find the caches which are laid by other 'players' of the game. Sometimes players will have to decipher codes or solve puzzles before a cache can be found, but more often than not they can be found with a GPS and a simple clue published on the website. The geocache itself can vary in size from a container not much bigger than a peanut to something resembling a large cake tin. Inside you will always find a piece of paper on which you can record your name and you may also find a pencil or pen and a few pieces of ‘treasure’ (normally trinkets like badges or keyrings) that can be traded by children.

Rushden GP Victoria Barber has set up a circuit of caches around Thrapston and to find them, you have to solve clues relating to the history of Thrapston. Families can enjoy a couple of miles stroll around the town then use the tea shops or pubs afterwards.

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Educational grants for Oundle youngsters

A local trust which supports residents of all ages in Oundle with grants, accommodation and community involvement is once more offering grants for young people attending or about to attend college or university. The Parson Latham’s trustees are inviting applications from young people who live in Oundle, are aged 16 years and over and who have attended a county primary, middle or upper school. The grant is for those already at or planning to attend technical school, college or university. The trustees will also consider grants for tools and equipment for apprenticeships or vocational training programmes. These grants are supported and funded by the ancient charity created by Parson Latham in 1611. He was responsible for establishing several schools and almshouses in Oundle, Barnwell and the surrounding area.

Get your application form from the Clerk to the Trustees, 24 North Street, Oundle, PE8 4AL, from Oundle Town Council offices, The Old Courthouse, Mill Road, Oundle or from www.parsonlathamscharity.org.uk. Completed forms should be returned to Graham Sands, Clerk to the Trustees, by the end of August for consideration by the trustees at their meeting in September 2012.

Stonepits Quarry, Benefield – consultation event

A consultation event will be held on 25 July at Benefield Village Hall from 3pm to 7.30pm to detail the proposed Stonepits Quarry between Upper and Lower Benefield. The event will include information boards, plans of the proposed quarry and informal discussions with the project team headed by GP Planning Ltd.

The event is open to local residents of Upper and Lower Benefield and any interested parties. If you are unable to attend and would like further information, email nathan@gpplanning.co.uk.

Broadband roll-out

A significant step has been taken towards having complete coverage of superfast broadband in Northamptonshire after the government announced the county would be in the first wave in the national roll-out programme.

Northamptonshire County Council’s strategy to implement the work joins an elite group of five local authorities which have been given the green light to start the tendering process for the initiative.

Originally, the county council had been included in the second wave of the roll-out programme but jumped forward after the government recognised the progress it has made, meaning implementation could now start as early as March 2013.

The council’s local broadband plan would bring potential internet speeds of at least 30Mb/sec for every household and business in the county.

The county council is aiming for at least 90% of thecounty to have superfast broadband speeds by the end of 2015 with 100% coverage by the end of 2017. For the latest information, visit www.superfastnorthamptonshire.net.

SWIMMING WIZARDS SWIM SCHOOL

LEARN TO SWIM AT CORBY EAST MIDLANDS INTERNATIONAL POOL

New swimming lessons available for children (aged 5+) at Corby International Pool from October 1st 2012. Limited spaces available, apply NOW to secure your place.

Quality swimming lessons for all ages and abilities. We follow the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) National Teaching Plan (NPTS).

Lessons continue all year round. Children are continually assessed and moved up when they achieve the required standard. Payments can be made by monthly direct debit (£16.50) or cash payments 4 times a year. Price includes Stage certificates and swimming hats.

Learn to Swim application forms can be collected from reception or printed from our website www.corby.gov.uk/corbypool

Diving Lessons available (children in Stage 4+) from Flip and Fun Stage 8. Price £16 per month Direct Debit.

Summer Activities

Including Rookie Lifeguard, Water Polo, Intensive Lessons and Intensive Diving lessons, please pick up our 6 week programme from reception or visit our website for further details. Start July 23.
Ask your councillor or MP

Council surgeries are open to members of the public who need information or advice, wish to make a complaint or enquire about services that the council provides.

Irthlingborough John Pyel Ward
Councillor Sylvia Hobbs holds a surgery on the last Saturday of each month between 9am-11am at The Old School, Station Street, Irthlingborough, NN9 6JP. You can contact her on 01832 622087 or email sylvia.hobbs.mp@parliament.uk

Irthlingborough Waterloo Ward – Cllr Bob Nightingale and Town Cllr Isabella Rollings hold a surgery on the 1st Friday of each month, 9am-11am at Crow Hill Community Centre, Irthlingborough. Rollings Saxon and Windmill Wards – Please call Raunds Town Hall on 01933 622087 and either Councillor Tony Boto, Ginnel Greenwood-Smith or Peter Wathen will contact you.

Raunds Saxon Ward – Councillor Brian Northall holds a surgery on the second Tuesday of every month, 10am – noon at Raunds Library.

Rushden – Please call the Town Council on 01933 316216 and the Ward councillors will get in touch with you.

Thrapston Lakes and Market Wards – Councillors Peter Baden and David Read hold a surgery on the 1st Saturday of each month at the Thrapston Centre, High Street, Thrapston, 10am and noon. No appointment necessary.

MP Peter Bone holds weekly Friday surgeries in his Wellingtonborough office 21 High Street NN8 4EF 3rd Friday in each month, surgery held at St Mary’s Church Hall, Rushden. Make an appointment by calling 01933 270943.

It’s important you have a say in the decisions that affect you. If you live in East Northamptonshire the council is part of your everyday life, so it’s important you have a say in the decisions that affect you.

You can find meeting dates, agendas and minutes at www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilmeetings To find out who your local councillor is visit www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/my-councillor

Meetings are held in the council chamber at the council offices, Cedar Drive, Thrapston and most start at 7.30pm. We have a wheelchair-friendly public gallery. If you think you might need help with access, call 01832 742113.

Have your say

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Monday 11 June Policy & Resources Committee
Tuesday 12 June Personnel Sub-Committee 2pm start in Room CHG2
Wednesday 13 June Development Control Committee – 7pm start

Monday 18 June Planning Policy Committee
Wednesday 20 June Standards Board

What’s on at ‘The Woolpack’

Spring Savers Menu

In an effort to give us all the opportunity of eating out we have come up with a range of menus where you can enjoy 2 courses for £9.95 or a full 3 courses for £11.95. In addition, in order that you get lots of choice these menus change every 2 weeks! This offer is available Monday – Saturday 12.00noon – 2.00pm & 6.00pm – 8.00pm. Full details are available on the website www.thewoolpackinn.com or call us on 01832-732578.

‘Daisy’s Tea Room’ at The Woolpack

We now have a beautiful tea room that is open from 9.00am – 3.00pm Monday to Saturday and 9.00am – 12.00noon on Sundays. We serve full English all-day breakfast for £4.95, along with a large range of homemade sandwiches and paninis, cakes and scones, puddings, snacks and drinks. We look forward to seeing you there!

Wednesday Karaoke

Come and join us for our Karaoke Nights. The fun starts at 9.00pm and carries on until 11.15pm. Entry is FREE and a good night is guaranteed! Date: Wednesday 13th June

Summer Ball – Friday 22nd June

A fun-filled evening including canapes on arrival and a fabulous two course menu. Live music with Leroy and Anna singing the best of Soul and Motown. Tickets only £25.00 per person.

Over to you 05
Churchfield Stone Ltd Investigate the Feasibility of Establishing a Conservation Stone Quarry at Stonepits Quarry, Benefield

Churchfield Stone Ltd and the Biggin and Benefield Estate are investigating the possibility of establishing a small-scale quarry to extract Blisworth Limestone, in the vicinity of Upper and Lower Benefield, near Oundle.

The proposed quarry will be located within an arable field, surrounded on all sides by hedgerows and groups of trees. The extraction area will be at least 250m away from the nearest residential properties. The proposed quarry will be located adjacent to a historic quarry, which previously supplied Blisworth Limestone, for the construction of residential properties and other civic buildings in Upper and Lower Benefield and in the surrounding area.

The quarry will produce a high quality stone for Blockstone, Flagstone, and Walling Stone, which will be suitable for use in building construction and maintenance of Listed Buildings and within Conservation Areas, helping to maintain and enhance the character of the local area. Blisworth Limestone is not worked within Northamptonshire, and is an important natural resource required to support the built heritage of the area.

The quarry will extract 67,860 tonnes of Blockstone and Flagstone and 50,895 tonnes of Walling Stone over a 17 year period. The quarry will be worked seasonally in progressive phases, and will consist of stone extraction, onsite hand processing of walling stone, ancillary infrastructure such as a weighbridge and wheelwash, with access along a track from a junction with the A427 between Upper and Lower Benefield. The extraction area will be restored to agricultural arable use solely using materials that arise from the quarry working.

A planning application is currently being prepared for submission to Northamptonshire County Council in Autumn 2012. As part of this ongoing process an Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Request has recently been submitted to Northamptonshire County Council for their consideration. The purpose of the request is to establish the scope of work required for submission with the planning application. Subsequently, the environmental acceptability of the proposed quarry will be assessed, and will consider a range of environmental topics, including Air Quality, Ecology, Flood Risk, Heritage, Hydrology and Hydrogeology, Noise, Traffic, Landscape and Visual Amenity. This work will include advice on the mitigation measures that will be needed to protect the residents of Upper and Lower Benefield.

****ENDS****

For more information please contact;

GP Planning Ltd (Nathan Maddox): 01604771123 or nathan@gpplanning.co.uk

Editor's Notes

1. Churchfield Stone Ltd are a sister company of the PGR Group, who are experienced quarry operators based in Oundle. Churchfield Stone Ltd is a leading manufacturer in the stone industry and specialise in working with and producing Natural English Limestone Building
Materials. The company is based at Harley Way, Churchfield where they utilise traditional masonry skills and efficient modern machinery to produce the high quality limestone materials.

2. GP Planning Ltd worked on the recent mineral planning permission gained by Churchfield Stone Ltd at Harley Way Quarry. Planning Permission ref 12/00001/MIN was granted in April 2012 for a quarry to extract Bliworth Limestone walling stone, a material which is suitable for construction and dry-stone walling. The Churchfield Stone Ltd Processing Facility is located in proximity to the Harley Way Quarry. The facility will accept the blockstone excavated at the proposed Stonepits Quarry, Benefield to produce the decorative blockstone and flagstone products.

3. GP Planning Ltd is an Environmental Planning Consultancy that specialises in minerals, waste and energy planning. It has a dedicated team of environmental planning consultants that work with a diverse range of clients on a wide range of projects, to a high degree of success.
APPENDIX 3: BENEFIELD PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENTS
Dear Sir/Madam

Stonepits Quarry, Benefield: Consultation Event
Wednesday 25th July 3.00pm - 7.30pm
Benefield Village Hall, Lower Benefield

On behalf of Churchfield Stone and the Biggin and Benefield Estate, I would like to invite you to a consultation event to discuss the proposed conservation stone quarry located between Upper and Lower Benefield.

The proposed conservation stone quarry will extract Blisworth Limestone for blockstone, flagstone and walling stone which, after processing, will be suitable for use in the restoration of Listed Buildings, particularly within Conservation Areas, and in general construction due to its attractive characteristics. The stone has historically been used extensively for building in Northamptonshire and surrounding areas and is evident in the construction of many of the houses in Upper and Lower Benefield as well as local National Trust buildings such as Lyvenden New Bield.

The event will be held on the 25th July 2012 at Benefield Village Hall between the times of 3pm to 7:30pm, and will provide an opportunity for attendees to view project proposals and provide feedback on the presented proposals. Project details will be presented through the use of information boards, visual displays; and informal discussion with members of the project team.

Should you be unable to attend the consultation event please send any requests for information or questions to nathan@gpplanning.co.uk or call on 01604771123 and I will endeavour to answer any queries that you may have. Otherwise I would be delighted if you felt able to join us at Benefield Village Hall.

Yours sincerely

Nathan Maddox
Consultant
Planning Application
A planning application, with Environmental Impact Assessment is currently being prepared for submission to Northamptonshire County Council in September 2012.

Why this stone, and why here?
• Blisworth Limestone is the common limestone of southern and eastern Northamptonshire.
• There has been a small quarry in the valley between Upper and Lower Benefield since the 19th Century, and it is believed that Hillside in Lower Benefield (1845) was built using stone from this quarry.

Community Consultation:
• Public Exhibition Wednesday 25th July 2012, Lower Benefield Village Hall, 03.00pm - 07.30pm.
A copy of the information presented at the Public Exhibition can be viewed on request at the following location:

PGR Group
6 The Old Quarry, Nene Valley Business Park, Oundle, Peterborough, Northamptonshire PE8 4HN
tel 01832 273950

• Organised Tour of Churchfield Stone Processing Plant
To request a place on this tour or to provide comment or ask any questions please contact:

Nathan Maddox
GP Planning Ltd
nathan@gpplanning.co.uk
tel 01604 771123

• The availability of stone is required because of the need to service the existing built heritage stock and to allow for the extension of buildings within Conservation Areas.
• The establishment of the quarry will diversify the range of heritage stone available to the local construction and conservation industry.

PROPOSAL FOR A CONSERVATION STONE QUARRY

CHURCHFIELD STONE QUARRY
Benefield, Oundle, Northamptonshire

A small scale Conservation Stone quarry, which will extract Blisworth Limestone suitable for use as Blockstone, Flagstone and Walling Stone.

Example walling stone
The Proposed Development

QUANTITIES
• 67,860 tonnes of Blockstone and Flagstone along with 50,895 of Walling Stone will be extracted.
• Approximately 4,000 tonnes of Blockstone and Flagstone and 3,000 tonnes of Walling Stone will be extracted each year.
• This equates to between 1 and 2 vehicle loads or 2 and 4 vehicle movements per day, during operating hours of 07:00 and 17:00 Monday to Friday.

TIMESCALES AND PHASES
• The quarry will be operated for up to 17 years, with stone extracted from the ground on a seasonal basis (up to 8 months per year).
• The quarry will be operated in 5 phases throughout its 17 year lifespan.

RESTORATION
• The quarry will be progressively restored to agricultural land using material from within the site. There will be NO materials brought into the site. 
• This will result in final land contours marginally lower than the existing contours.

ANCILLARY DEVELOPMENT
• Access to the A427
• A haul road from the quarry to the A427, 685m in length, 5m wide, single track with 4 passing places, surfaced primarily with hardcore
• A wheelwash, weighbridge and weighbridge office
• Staff welfare facilities
• Area of hardstanding for vehicle parking and stockpiling of materials
• Settlement pond for drainage
• Overburden storage mound, up to a maximum of 5m in height
• Top-soil and sub-soil storage mounds up to a maximum of 3m and 5m in height respectively
• Security gate and fencing

Walling Stone - Cropped by Hand Held Axe
STONEPITS QUARRY
CONSULTATION EVENT
BENEFIELD VILLAGE HALL
3:00pm - 7:30pm

THE FACTS!
WHAT IS IT?

THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
A small-scale Conservation Stone quarry, which will extract Blisworth Limestone suitable for use as Blockstone, Flagstone, and Walling Stone.

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- The quarry will be operated in 5 phases throughout its 17 year lifespan.

RESTORATION
- The quarry will be progressively restored to agricultural land using material from within the site.
- This will result in final land contours marginally lower than the existing contours.

ANCILLARY DEVELOPMENT
- Access to the A427
- A haul road from the quarry to the A427

WHAT IT IS NOT?
- There will be NO blasting undertaken as a part of the quarry operations.
- There will be NO mechanical pecking of the stone during extraction.
- There will be NO crushing of rock on site.
- The quarry will NOT operate on weekends.
- The proposed excavation area will NOT be wholly stripped of its Top-soil and Sub-soil at the beginning: it will be done in phases.
- Storage mounds will NOT be constructed in one go, construction will follow the advancement of the phases.
- There will be NO materials (including inert waste or general waste) brought into the site for restoration.
- The quarry will NOT be left as a hole in the ground.
ON SITE PROCESSING

Stripping of Top-Soil and Sub Soil and overburden for use in construction of Screening and Storage mounds until it is required for restoration

Construction of Haul Road and Site Infrastructure

Blisworth Limestone material extracted with 360° Excavator

Separation of Blockstone, Walling Stone and Waste Stone

BLOCKSTONE

Blockstone stockpiled awaiting transportation off site

WALLING STONE

Walling Stone will be stockpiled awaiting on site processing

WASTE STONE

Waste Stone stockpiled in mound until it is required for restoration purposes

Blockstone loaded onto Articulated HGVs and transported to the Churchfield Stone Processing Plant along Harley Way.

Walling stone cropped using hydraulic cropper and hand held stone axes

Hand processed stone placed in 1 tonne bags awaiting sale to market

Stone transported in 20 tonne loads

Stone transported in 20 tonne loads

OFF SITE PROCESSING

Blockstone unloaded at Churchfield Stone Processing Plant

Blockstone processed to create decorative lintels, quoins, fenestrations and flagstone

Sale to Market

S T O N E P I T S Q U A R R Y C O N S U L T A T I O N E V E N T

WEDNESDAY 25TH JULY 2012
WHY THIS STONE?

- Blisworth Limestone is the common limestone of southern and eastern Northamptonshire.
- The limestone is usually cream or grey in colour. There are variations in the appearance of the Blisworth Limestones which signify the geographic variations of the source of the limestone.
- The Blisworth Limestone outcrop present at Benefield is covered by a thick layer of clay up over 10m deep in places, which would have been deposited over the top of the limestone during the Ice Age.
- The clay has played an important role in the formation and protection of the Blisworth Limestone. Where these thicker deposits of clay are present, the stone is high quality and can be utilised by masons for the production of ashlar, semi-dressed stones, quoins, etc.
- There has been a small quarry in the valley for some time. It is believed that a number of properties in Lower Benefield were built using stone from this quarry. This stone is in very good condition and has weathered well. There is also evidence of this quarry in early 20th Century texts and on OS maps from the late 19th Century. This quarry was filled with rubble and some rubbish and is now a woodland copse.

Use of stone in Conservation Areas and maintenance of Listed Buildings
- The availability of stone is required because of the need to service existing built heritage stock and to allow for the extension of buildings within Conservation Areas.
- Currently buildings which have traditionally used Blisworth Limestone in their construction are being maintained using ‘other’ heritage stones. This is due to the lack of quarries extracting the Blisworth Limestone material. The establishment of the Stonepits Quarry will diversify the range of heritage stone available to the local construction and conservation industry.
- There are numerous buildings within Oundle, Upper and Lower Benefield and Barnwell that have used Blisworth Limestone in their construction, for example:
  - The Town Hall, in Oundle Market Place
  - Latham’s Hospital, North Street, Oundle
  - The Paines Almshouses, West Street, Oundle

Oundle Congregational Church
The White Lion Public House, Oundle
Livyden New Bield
Residential Properties, Lower Benefield

Requirement for New Homes
- East Northamptonshire has a recognised annual housing construction rate of between 387 and 500 per year for the period between 2011 and 2021 (North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit Core Spatial Strategy). A proportion of the houses will be built in and around Conservation Areas, where heritage stone will be required for construction to maintain the existing characteristics and continuity of those areas. Key Growth Areas which have designated conservation areas are:
  - Oundle
  - Raunds
  - Thrapston
  - King’s Cliffe
  - Nassington

WHY IS IT NEEDED?

STONEPITS QUARRY CONSULTATION EVENT

WEDNESDAY 25TH JULY 2012
The Location of the Quarry:
The location for the quarry falls within Flood Zone 1, i.e. a low probability of flooding.
The proposed excavation area will be 2.3ha.
It is an arable field, ALC Grade 3. Mature trees on the boundaries have the potential to support bat roosts and birds including barn owl and skylark.

Haul Road Junction with A427:
A427 is a single two-way carriageway road providing a link between Oundle and the A605 to the east, and Corby to the west. Between Lower and Upper Benefield the A427 has a 60 mph speed limit, no footways or street lighting. The visibility at this junction is considered appropriate to the type of vehicle and speed of the road.

The Context:

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THE LAYOUT OF THE QUARRY

The quarry will be worked in 5 phases. The remainder of the land will be retained and worked as arable land until such time as it is brought into operation. The extent of the Top-Soil, Sub-Soil, and Overburden Mounds will change over the lifetime of the quarry.

Phasing of the Quarry

- **Phase 1:** Overburden
- **Phase 2:** Top-soil / Sub-soil Mound (ungrassed)
- **Phase 3:** Wheelwash
- **Phase 4:** Weighbridge with office
- **Phase 5:** Remainder of land as arable land

The extent of the Top-Soil, Sub-Soil, and Overburden Mounds will change over the lifetime of the quarry.

**KEY**

- Planning Application Boundary
- Proposed phasing of excavation
- Contour (mAO)
HAUL ROAD AND ACCESS

- The haul road will be 685m in length, single track with 4 passing places (32m x 3.5m).
- It is 5m wide and will be a hardcore track, with tarmac planings or concrete at the junction with A427 and entrance to the quarry.
- The haul road will cross two Public Rights of Way, access to the public rights of way will not be lost to users and suitable signage, and crossings will be provided.
- The junction with the A427 will be designed to allow for safe access to the public highway.

VEHICLE TYPES AND MOVEMENTS

- Material will be transported offsite in 20 tonne loads, on articulated Heavy Goods Vehicles, during operating hours of 07:00 to 17:00 Monday to Friday.

Blockstone and Flagstone Movements
- 200 loads per year out
- 400 vehicle movements per year
- To Stone Processing Plant, Harley Way

Walling Stone
- 150 loads per year out
- 300 vehicle movements per year
- To market

Other
- Up to 4 staff on site when operational, creating 8 movements per day

Variations in Vehicle Movements
- The quarry will produce up to a maximum of 4 vehicle loads (8 vehicle movements) per day during peak times of market demand.
- There will be no traffic movements on some days, during periods of low market demand.
- If the stone is removed over an 8 month period (or 36 weeks per year) while the quarry excavation is operational, this would result in average movements of around 2 vehicle loads or 4 vehicle movements per day.
- It is likely that some previously excavated stone may be removed at other times of the year to meet market requirements. If the traffic movements are considered across the 12 month period (or 50 weeks) this would result in average movements of 1.5 vehicle loads or 3 vehicle movements per day.
- Therefore, it is likely that vehicle movements will be between 1 and 2 vehicle loads or 2 and 4 vehicle movements per day.
NOISE

Background Noise Levels
Following baseline noise monitoring the baseline noise level for the locality has been identified at ~33.6 dB (LA90), which is considered to be representative of a low background noise level.

Noise Monitoring Locations
- Coronation Crescent
- The Grange, Causeway
- Wheatsheaf Hotel
- No 24 Upper Main Street
- No 31 Upper Main Street

Noise Generating Equipment
The expected noise generators are:
- JCB 220 Excavator
- JCB 210 Excavator
- Dumptruck
- Mobile water bowser
- Mobile road sweeper

Reduction in Noise
- Measures to reduce noise during the operations include:
  - The location of soil storage mounds on the northern edge of the quarry

Use of quieter or silent types of warning for reversing mobile site plant
The use of a shed around the stone cropping

Potential Impacts from Noise
A site noise limit at dwellings of no less than 45 dB (LAeq) is suggested for routine operations, and a site noise limit at dwellings of 50 dB (LAeq) for combined operations of routine and temporary works is suggested based on appropriate guidance.

The calculated noise levels at dwellings ranges from 31 - 41 dB (LAeq) for routine operations and 44 - 50 dB (LAeq) for combined operations and therefore is below the suggested noise limits.

The proposed operations confirm to guidance set out in the Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework, it is considered that the site can be worked while keeping noise emissions to within environmentally acceptable limits.

AIR QUALITY AND DUST

Air Quality
The baseline air quality in the area is good. Prevailing winds blow from the south west and west.

Sources of Dust
- The potential sources of dust include:
  - Soil, Striping and Replacement
  - Overburden Handling
  - Mineral Extraction
  - Loading and Tipping
  - Site Haulage
  - Stone Cropping
  - Road Transport
  - Wind Blow - across loose bare surfaces

Reducing Dust
- Measures to reduce the impact of dust include:
  1. Dust Control conditions included on the Planning Permission and enforced by the Mineral Planning Authority
  2. Daily visual inspections to be undertaken by the Quarry Manager
  3. Use of clean water for dust suppression
  4. High standards of site management to minimise wind blown dust
  5. Use of a wheelwash to minimise dust emissions from lorry movements
  6. Preventative maintenance programme to ensure the efficient operation of dust suppression equipment
  7. Seeding of soil bunds to bind surface
  8. Controlled loading and tipping heights and locations
  9. Spraying of haul road regularly in dry conditions
  10. Construction of concrete aprons at site access and where footpaths cross the haul road.
  11. Stone cropping will be undertaken within specialised sheds on site
  12. A water bowser fitted with a spray bar and a water gun will be kept on site

Possible Impacts
With the adoption of standard good practices and the measures listed above there will be a very near zero risk of adverse impacts due to dust, which are very unlikely to be experienced at any residential receptor within the vicinity of the site, and are unlikely to impact on pedestrians using the public right of way network.

The quarry is unlikely to cause any adverse dust or air quality impacts in the vicinity of the site.
VISUAL AMENITY

General Visibility
Located on the north-western side of a relatively open shallow valley, orientated towards the south east, views are afforded of the site from the surrounding landscape to the east, south and west. The existing woodland associated with the former quarry filters views of the site from the north and north-east. The existing topography to the north within Upper Benefield forms a local shallow plateau and thus restricts views from this direction. There are some views from the south-east within Lower Benefield towards the site but these are oblique and the existing woodland within the former quarry helps to restrict/filter a full view of the site. The Grange located on the western edge of Lower Benefield on Causin Way has the most direct view of the site due to its orientation looking north-west and its elevated situation.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility
The Zone of Theoretical Visibility establishes the likely area within which it may be possible to see the quarry. Within this zone, 8 viewpoints have been identified as being representative of a range of sensitive receptors, where there might be the potential for impact on visual amenity as a result of the quarry.

LANDSCAPE

The site is located within Countryside Character Volume 4 East Midlands. It is located within Countryside Character Area 92 Rockingham Forest.

At the district scale the site is located within:
- Limestone Landscapes – Limestone Valley Slopes
- Landscape Character Type
- Landscape Character Area 7c Rockingham Plateau

Notable landscape components, which combine to create the site’s rural agricultural character, are as follows:
- Hedgerows both managed and unmanaged on northern, eastern and southern boundaries
- Individual semi mature hedgerow trees within the northern, eastern and southern boundaries
- Woodland block associated with the former quarry on the eastern boundary
- Sloping topography

STONEPITS QUARRY CONSULTATION EVENT

WEDNESDAY 25TH JULY 2012
**LANDSCAPE**

Suggested measures to enhance the landscape in or near the quarry include:

- Hedgerow planting, including either side of the haul road, using native species
- Tree planting, including hedgerow trees, and the creation of an extension to the woodland copse on the site of the Old Benefield Quarry, using native species
- Grass seeding of soil and overburden mounds

**BIODIVERSITY**

Suggested measures to enhance the biodiversity in or near the quarry include:

- Hedgerow planting
- Tree planting, including hedgerow trees
- Retention of grassland verges
- Introduction of swales and small ponds, and a larger pond on the southern boundary
- Enhance and extend the semi-improved neutral grassland
- Introduce areas of calcaereous grassland, with a limestone base

This would bring biodiversity benefits for:

- Invertebrates
- Birds, including yellow hammer
- Foraging Bats
- Brown Hare
- Foraging Badger

**PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY**

Suggested measures to enhance and protect the public right of way network in or near the quarry include:

- Timber fencing, with gates, at the crossing point of the footpaths and haul road
- A concrete apron at the crossing point of the footpaths and haul road, to protect the footpath
- Appropriate signage to warn pedestrians of passing vehicles
- Interpretation boards
The planning process is one that has to consider a wide range of factors and complexities with respect to the detail of the quarry development and the surrounding environment and local amenity.

The nature, size and detail of the proposed quarry means that the development has been screened against the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations to determine whether an EIA is required. The need to produce a formal Environmental Impact Assessment was established after a Screening Opinion was sent to Northamptonshire County Council in March 2012. The EIA regulations have to be adhered to in assessing the potential impact of the development. A wide range of technical work has been undertaken to assess the potential environmental impacts of the proposed development, including:

- Air Quality and Dust
- Flood Risk
- Heritage
- Hydrology and Hydrogeology
- Landscape and Visual Impact
- Noise
- Planning History and Policy Context
- Traffic and Transport

The planning application itself will also be informed by a range of technical assessments which will not fall under the EIA regulations. They are:

- Ecology
- Geology and Geo-engineering
- Soil Quality

**THE NEXT STEPS**

The next steps following this consultation event are:

- Review all comments, questions, feedback
- Report outcomes to interested parties
- Receive Scoping Opinion from Northamptonshire County Council
- Finalise quarry design
- Undertake further assessment work
- Submit planning application
- Further meetings with Benefield Parish Council
HOW CAN WE HELP YOU, THE LOCAL COMMUNITY OR VILLAGE?

USE THE PENS AND POST IT NOTES AND ADD YOUR QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND THOUGHTS HERE
Dear Sir/Madam

Stonepits Quarry, Benefield: Visit to Harley Way Stone Processing Plant
Wednesday 26th September 2.00pm - 3.00pm
Harley Way Stone Processing Plant, Churchfield Farm

On behalf of Churchfield Stone and the Biggin and Benefield Estate, I would like to invite you to a visit to the Harley Way Stone Processing Plant at Churchfield Farm. The plant which is operated by Churchfield Stone Ltd will process the stone from the Stonepits Quarry at Benefield.

The visit will be held on the 26th September 2012 at Harley Way Stone Processing Plant between the times of 2pm to 3pm, and will provide an opportunity for attendees to view the operation of the plant and to see the dressed stone produced.

For Health and Safety reasons it is required that all attendees register their attendance by Friday 21st of September.

To register your attendance please contact Nathan Maddox of GP Planning Ltd on nathan@gpplanning.co.uk or call on 01604 771123.

Yours sincerely

Nathan Maddox
Consultant