

Letter of Objection

Application No: WSCC/030/21

Loxwood Clay Pits: "Claypit quarry and construction materials recycling facility, Pallinghurst Woods, Loxwood Road, Loxwood, West Sussex, RH14 ORW

From: Mr Gareth Benjamin Evans; Soroba, The Drive, Ifold, Loxwood, West Sussex, RH14 0DN

Objection

I have a long association with Loxwood following my family moving to Ifold in 1981. Growing up in the area I have enjoyed many years of walking through these beautiful and tranquil woods which are a much-treasured landmark of Loxwood.

Furthermore, as one of the District Councillors for the Loxwood Ward I have been inundated with different forms of communication from concerned residents from not just the Loxwood Ward but also the neighbouring local communities of Tismans Common, Bucks Green, Rudgwick, Alfold and Cranleigh. In addition, the petition I set up has been signed over 5000 times clearly demonstrating strong opposition to this type of planning application <https://www.change.org/p/no-to-loxwood-clay-pit-construction-material-site-in-loxwood-woods>

My objection therefore is twofold – my concerns as a long-term resident and ensuring that the many concerned residents have their voice heard by a democratically elected representative.

I am very concerned as to the environmental devastation that approval of this application would inflict on this community now and for future generations at a time when climate change emergencies are being declared and time is running out to act.

For these reasons and the points raised below I am writing to register **my objection** and urge the panel to refuse this planning application:

Development plan

- This proposal does not conform with either the Loxwood Neighbourhood Plan or the Chichester District Local plan for development in a rural area.
- It is not sensitive to the setting
- It will do the opposite of enhancing, protecting, or complimenting the rural character of the area and the natural environment.
- It offers no benefit to the local community only destruction

Tranquillity and Environment

- This would bring devastation to a remote, beautiful, and tranquil setting which has low level background noise.

- The operations would require significant lighting which would violate the dark skies policy not to mention the trauma it would cause to local wildlife.
- The noise and fume pollution created by the operations of the site would render the surrounding PROW unusable
- The daily volume of HGV lorry movements, skip lorries and the wheel wash facility will create significant noise disturbance which will be enhanced against the backdrop of a formally peaceful environment. The beautiful sounds of birdsong will be lost forever and the impact on residents' wellbeing and mental health should not be underestimated or overlooked when determining this application.
- The site features mature trees which are due to be felled to make way for this development are which have potential roosting features for bats. Within this site there are four threatened (priority species) for example the very rare Barbastelle Bat.
- Loss of woodland - It is utterly devastating that over 8c hectares of woodland (including veteran trees) are proposed to be felled. In addition, irreplaceable ancient woodland will be lost to home the wheel wash in the lay-by.
- The high level of development in the north of the district has led to water stress in Loxwood with increasing demand which would be exacerbated by this development

Loss of Amenity

- There are valid concerns regarding the fact that the site access for HGV's will run alongside PROW used by members of the public and this effectively renders this local amenity unusable. Furthermore, the application proposes the closure footpath 792-1.
- The justification from the applicant that this is a temporary cite is effectively obsolete since the 33 years renders it lost to a generation and there is no guarantee that an extension will not be sought once planning permission is given. There are no two ways about it this amenity will be lost.
- Local schools like Rikkyo school will be significantly impacted by noise, dust and pollutants (carried by South Westerly Winds) which is a significant risk to the 300 students and staff, but longer term potentially risks the viability of the business which would effectively lose its tranquil school setting. The school is a significant partner of this community and the impact on them must be considered.

Suitability of location

- The site is wholly unsuitable and would destroy a beautiful greenfield site and is in opposition to national policy which states that waste sites prioritise brownfield sites or built up areas.
- Access to the site utilises an unsuitable minor road which is used by cyclists, horse riders, cars, and walkers. The addition of a high-volume HGVs would create significant safety concerns for these users.

- The aesthetic of the woodlands for be destroyed by a 15,000 sq ft building and there is no precedent for this.
- Established neighbouring farming activity would be in conflict with the pollutants created by the operations outlined in this planning application.

Demand for Clay/Waste Site

- According to WSCC latest Minerals Monitoring report there is no demand for clay with more the 25 years of reserves. The application should be challenged in this point alone, however there are three additional sites in the local area, two of which have 25 years supply and the other on 24 years so local and national levels can be met via these alternative locations.
- There is an environmental downside with this application which would require the clay to be transported to a brickmaking factory which is why brickmaking factories tend to be adjacent to where the extraction took place to mitigate this.
- Given that the clay is not needed there is no justification for a waste site in this unsuitable location whilst there is currently sufficient capacity for Construction and Demolition waste in West Sussex. Furthermore, the plan to recycle only 50% of waste brought into the site would be well below industry standard.

Traffic and safety

- The increase in HGV movements and the site entrance/exit poses significant safety risks for other road users in the community.
- Congestion will increase impacting local vilages/hamlets of Bucks Green, Tismans Common and Rudgwick.
- Impact on highway safety along Loxwood Road from high passing speeds on a restricted width carriageway. The road is just apparently just 5.1m wide at its narrowest point and 5.5m along most of its length (wholly unsuitable). There is a severe highway safety issue from HGVs entering and exiting the Loxwood Road/A281 junction at Bucks Green.
- Potential damage to beautiful Listed Buildings in the community which will surely be at risk to the increased HGV traffic along the proposed route

I hope that the many points in this objection and those that others have raised make it clear that this application is unwelcome and unsuitable. It should be refused in the strongest possible terms, and I am utterly opposed to it.