

FRIENDS OF THE PEAK DISTRICT
CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND
SOUTH YORKSHIRE

MINERALS AND QUARRYING POLICY STATEMENT

BACKGROUND

National context

The unsustainable use of natural resources and the increase in aggregate-hungry patterns of development threatens the very fabric of our rural areas. The conflict between quarrying and countryside protection is one of the most challenging issues for rural campaigners as many of the areas where the highest quality minerals are found are also places with high landscape value. There is a need to attribute greater weight to the value of the countryside, landscape and tranquility and to reduce the primary extraction of minerals by encouraging more prudent use of natural resources and greater use of recycled and secondary materials.

Local issues

a. Peak District - for centuries mineral extraction has been an important industry for the Peak District, historically based on lead, other vein minerals and building, roofing and walling stone. Today the most common products extracted from the Peak District are limestone (predominantly for aggregate), dimensional building stone (sandstone/millstone grit) and vein minerals such as fluorspar, barytes and calcite. Key issues in the Peak District are ***excessive landbanks for aggregate and old minerals permissions*** (OMPs) issued prior to 1982. These poorly defined permissions, some of which date back to the 1950s and earlier, provide a constant threat to landscapes where new consents would not be granted. However, the Peak District is also an area where high quality deposits of fluorspar and building stone exist and as such the incentive to quarry for these products is great. More specific problems relate to stalled Environment Act reviews, a lack of assessment of gritstone resources in and around the Park, the unauthorised sale of limestone from vein mineral sites, and general enforcement issues.

b. South Yorkshire - deep and surface (opencast) coal mining has left the strongest mark on the South Yorkshire landscapes although sand and gravel deposits are also exploited in the Doncaster area. Extensive peat extraction took place on Thorne and Hatfield Moors but the main permissions have now been revoked and compensation paid. Current issues centre on new open cast coal proposals and the extension of limestone quarries in Doncaster and Rotherham.

POLICY AIMS

- To minimise and, wherever possible, prevent the damaging impact of minerals extraction on sensitive rural environments, particularly focusing on the Peak District National Park and other designated areas in the region
- To reduce mineral demand by changes in national and regional policy focusing on a 'plan, monitor and manage' approach and greater use of recycled and substitute/secondary materials
- To support, where appropriate, sensitively sited new minerals development either in cases of winning stone for conserving or enhancing the local built environment (see separate policy statement: Small scale quarrying for local building materials) or for proven national need

PRIORITIES

Focused campaigning will be undertaken in support of achieving the policy aims. Work on other issues should be undertaken in a focused, case-related manner where time and resources allow.

A. *Old mineral permissions** – lobby to ensure that reviews of old mineral permissions meet the highest environmental standards (through the application of environmental assessment procedures) or, wherever appropriate, are relinquished

B. *Opposing new minerals development** – in support of MPS1, we will oppose new minerals development on areas with landscape/countryside (National Park, AONB, green belt) or nature conservation (SPA, SAC, NNR, SSSI) designations or allied areas/sites such as Scheduled Ancient Monuments and other environmentally important areas, particularly where less-damaging alternatives are available

C. *Monitoring working conditions and associated impacts* – through pro-active monitoring and reporting, ensure operators abide by conditions set by MPAs. Also where appropriate, campaign to reduce associated quarrying impacts e.g. noise, light pollution, dust, traffic impacts (safety, verges), wildlife impacts etc

D. *Promoting small-scale quarrying* – recognising the need for the conservation and enhancement of the local built environment, Friends of the Peak District and CPRE South Yorkshire will endeavour to support appropriately sited quarry development for key building products

E. *Managing the resource** – contribute to national lobbying to reduce the damage to the countryside from quarrying by encouraging more efficient end use (predominantly of aggregates), including waste reduction, recycling and use of appropriate alternative products

F. *Influencing Local Plans* – comment on draft Mineral Local Plans to influence demand for and proposed location of new workings and contribute to more prudent use of natural resources nationally

*denotes working with national partner organisations (CPRE, CNP) where appropriate

It is recognised that past mineral development and quarrying has contributed significantly to both landscape character and livelihoods within much of the Branch's area. The well-being of landscapes, amenity and communities should be balanced so as to contribute to the sustainable development of the region.

TRADING OF MINERAL PERMISSIONS The Branch has a presumption against trading of minerals permissions except under the following circumstances:

- value of what is being traded is known
- tangible and guaranteed net benefits (environmental, economic, social)
- thorough assessment of certainty of trade providing these benefits
- likelihood of permission being traded being exploited
- certainty of need for mineral and lack of alternatives

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