

Hi folks my name is Bill Southam , I'm 71 & I've lived in Cookley for 20 years .

What I'd like to talk about today is public perception . We've had or will have the 'facts' according to both sides & I expect the inspector will have to make his decision based mainly on those & the law as it presently stands . However what could be more damaging, in this largely built up area to local businesses & residents, is what the general public percieve to be the effects on themselves, their loved ones health both physical & mental,their houses & their businesses if the proposed quarry went ahead . I'll give some examples of what has already happened or could happen

The Macdonalds who incredibly would have to live in the middle of the quarry & who run a livery yard. They've ran this for over 55 years & obviously as it's lasted this long it was succesful . In fact they were one of the reasons I moved to Cookley. As soon as the quarry proposal was annouced they lost approximently 40 % of their liveries ,as the horse owners percieved that having horses next to a quarry would not be pleasant, picturesque or a healthy place to keep them . To date because of the uncertainty, their business has not recovered . As an aside the effects on the MacDonalds physical & mental health during this prolonged ordeal can also be imagined. Mel has had an ongoing condition for all the years I've known her & stress is known to make it worse

Another example is Heathfield Knoll School which lies across the Wolverley Road . On one side of the road behind a broken down wall will be the quarry, whose workers will presumably be wearing PPE & on the other side will be a private school catering for children aged from 3 months to 18 years old. Now as it's a private school , 400 hundred years old I believe it primarily relies on fees to survive, so will parents regardless of any facts supplied percieve that it's a safe place to send their children to, or will they send them to other local private schools , such as Holy Trinity 3 miles away. I know what my personal choice would be. In fact I believe there is a strong possability that the school

could eventually close, if the quarry goes ahead, with a loss of around 100 jobs.

A similar situation at the other end of the age range, is also across the road from the proposed quarry, being Nightengales Residential Home . Again will families entrust their loved ones ,some of whom will have breathing problems to a home that they percieve not to be safe ? I also know what my choice would be .

Yet another business I believe would be adversely affected is the Wolverley Camping & Caravanning Club Site. Who'd want to camp next to a quarry ? Whereas the impact of any dust is debatable, what's not debatable is the noise however slight or not which continues for six days a week. Any loss of business would of course have a knock on effect on The Lock & Queens Head public houses , the tea rooms & the Wolverley Pitch & Putt, who are all situated close to the site.

Also affected of course would be the thousands of local residents whose properties would instantly become less desirable & less valuable . Most of us who moved to Cookley did so for the beautiful countryside . Would we have knowing that we'd be next to a Quarry ? I wouldn't have. The threat of the quarry is already patently obvious in Cookley, where houses in roads that normally sell before the for sale signs go up, are still unsold months on .

The previous was only based on public perception but i do wonder if the quarry does go ahead will the proposed 2nd housing estate of 800 houses ,primary school & various small businesses, also go ahead ? A number of residents of the initial 600 houses have stated that they knew nothing of the proposed quarry, when they purchased their properties & have also stated that they wouldn't have purchased them if they'd known. Will people purchase expensive houses next to a quarry ? I know it's in the Local Plan but would developers take the risk ? Only they know & they've kept pretty quiet about it of late .

Finally & this is from me personally. I was born in Aston in Birmingham ,home of the famous Aston Villa but as Tom Hanks the actor

discovered when he picked the Villa as his English football team to support, based on the 'nice name', Aston was far more Peaky Blinders than Downton Abbey & I never saw a green field until I went on my holidays aged 5. Holidays for most in the 1950's weren't a fortnight in the Maldives or even a week at Weston. No my first holiday was a tram day trip to the Lickey Hills on the outskirts of Birmingham . When I stood on the top of the Beacon Hill & looked in amazement at the green fields of Worcestershire, as opposed to the smog clouds hanging over the black buildings of Birmingham I determined that one day I would live in the countryside. It took me until 50 to achieve this dream as the career I finished up in didn't pay a high salary , but once I'd visited Cookley to learn horse riding & met people like the Macdonalds , my future partner Lisa & numerous others I knew this is where I wanted to live. It took me a while to get used to people saying good morning or talking to me, as in Brum you only speak to relatives or ex school friends on the street but I soon adjusted to it & to such an extent that Lisa doesn't send me on foot to the shops anymore. as a five minute trip can now take me an hour. In Birmingham I never got involved in local affairs, preferring to keep myself to myself but in Cookley after a few years I became a parish Councillor, joined the monthly litter pick & became treasurer of the local allotment society. I also jointly formed Cookley in Bloom as part of the Britain in Bloom competition & we've just been awarded a Gold medal for the 5th year on the trot. The judges mentioned in their comments about the strong community spirit in Cookley & the opposition to the quarry proposal demonstrates it. One of my favourite walks with my dog Monty is along the proposed quarry site & it was a life saver in the lockdown, as I was classed as vulnerable & indeed I lost three close friends to Covid . However the sound of the skylarks, a red list species & the sight of the Wellingtonia trees in the fields never failed to lift my spirits and calm my fears . I somehow doubt the sound & sight of the quarry will have the same effect . Thank you for allowing me time to express my views & I hope common sense will prevail & this ridiculous proposal will again be rejected & hopefully NRS will finally realise & get the message that a quarry here is not wanted & will turn their attention

to a truly rural site which may not be quite so profitable because of the infrastructure but would still achieve them a tidy sum & only upset one man & his dog & not upset or affect thousands of people who just want to go about their lives in health, safety & peace & enjoy the site's natural beauty . Thank you

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