

HUNCOTE PARISH COUNCIL



THE HISTORIC SITE OF CROFT HILL FROM HUNCOTE.

FINAL WRITTEN SUBMISSION FOR THE HEARING TO BE HELD

4th MARCH 2009

INTO LEICESTERSHIRE MINERALS DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

CORE STRATEGY & DEVELOPMENT CONTROL POLICIES.

Supply : General Matters & Aggregates



HUNCOTE PARISH COUNCIL

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Mr A. S Freeman, BSc (Hons), DipTP, DipEM, FRTPI, FIHT, MIEEnvSc,
c/o Dawn MacLeod,
Programme Officer,
Leicestershire Minerals Development Framework Examination,
County Hall Library,
Glenfield,
Leicester.
LE3 8RA

12th December 2008

Dear Mr Freeman,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our final comments and to confirm our intention to attend the Hearings at 9.30 am and at 2.00pm on Wednesday 4th March 2009.

Croft Quarry has been the site of high quality granite extraction for the past 150 years. The village of Huncote developed as a result of the quarrying with many villagers still employed at the site. Therefore the Parish Council is not against the expansion of the quarry at Croft. Rather we think there is an opportunity to use the existing site to remove the amount of stone needed without the need to destroy the historically important site of Croft Hill.

We will firstly explain the importance of Croft Hill (OS Grid Reference SP510967) and thereafter respond to the topic notes. Croft Hill stands 128m high rising above the Soar flood plain in a largely flat area of Leicestershire. The Hill provides a number of habitats including broad leaved woodland, scrub land, acidic grassland and two other distinct areas of grassland. It is an important area in view of the variety of flora, fauna, birds and butterflies which inhabit or visit at various times of the year and it is a triple site of special scientific interest (SSI).

Ancient civilisations lacking modern aids to navigation established a vast network of straight tracks which enabled the traveller to navigate his way to anywhere in Britain. At a very important site of Antiquity three Ley-lines often cross on the site. At Croft Hill there are at least fourteen tracks passing exactly through the summit. There is some evidence to suggest that the whole layout of Leicestershire and the position of its towns and villages is dependent on the exact position and height of Croft Hill.

Evidence of life around Croft Hill has been found which dates back 300,000 to 500,000 years. Artefacts authenticated as dating from Lower Palaeolithic through Mesolithic - Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Corieltauvian, Roman, Saxon, Viking, Norman, Mediaeval, Tudor and Jacobean eras to the present day have been recorded and photographed.

Croft Hill because of its individual shape and its position was used in Saxon times as a place of assembly where matters of importance were discussed and settled. Such was the case in 836 when Wiglaf, king of Mercia, was joined by the Archbishop of Canterbury and eleven of his bishops and three abbots, besides twenty-two laymen of authority and influence to witness a grant of land by Wiglaf to the monastery of Hanbury in Worcestershire.

Historians state that in 1124 forty four men were executed on Croft Hill and from this sinister background the local communities of both Croft and Huncote have looked to the hill to play a part in their social diaries and, as recently as the Millennium, a beacon was lit at the top of the Hill. It is a "Trig point" and is also used

by the RAF as a point at which they obtain navigational bearings during exercises and this occurs up to the present day.


Referring to the topic notes it was noted in paragraph 4.16 – Provision for Crushed Rock, you queried whether Croft Quarry should be excluded/ subject to additional protection. This seems to have been dismissed out of hand by Leicestershire County Council (LCC) in paragraph 28. We do not agree with their submissions in this paragraph, we do not believe they satisfactorily answer the question posed in 4.16.

Additionally, in paragraph 28 LCC seeks to link the position at Croft Quarry with that of Bardon Quarry mentioned in 4.17 of your questions. As you saw fit to separate the two areas we do not think it is correct for LCC to link the two in their reply in paragraph 28. If you see fit to identify them as separate then we think LCC should do the same.

In paragraph 4.11 of the Topic note Provision for Crushed Rock, you asked if the figures in box 2 have been over estimated. It is not possible for anyone to question these figures given that it would appear that they are protected by the need for commercial confidentiality and we would question as to what point the need for commercial confidentiality should be overridden by the need to know in the cause of “public good”.

Finally we ask you to note our fear that at some point in the future there may be an attempt to offer the slag heap adjacent to Croft Hill as an “alternative Croft Hill” so we believe this is an important opportunity to clearly differentiate between the two sites and preserve the historic site for the future. We acknowledge that Aggregate Industries has made efforts to landscape the slag heap but it has not achieved the same biodiversity as the historic site which is listed as a triple SSI.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alison Watson".

Alison Watson
Clerk to Huncote Parish Council