

Blaise Farm Quarry

West Malling



INFORMATION BROCHURE FOR BLAISE FARM QUARRY

Gallagher Aggregates has been quarrying limestone in Kent for over 25 years. We operate the only two crushed rock quarries in the South East of England at Hermitage Quarry and Blaise Farm Quarry, which account for around 8% of the total crushed rock consumption in the region. The other 92% of the crushed rock capacity is met either by railed in aggregates from the South West of England and the Midlands or by sea from Scotland and Europe.

The aggregates we produce in Kent serve the local construction of roads, schools, hospitals and housing. We also provide Kentish Ragstone masonry for new build and restoration projects.

As part of our drive to continually improve the efficiency and minimise the impact of our operations, we are reviewing our blasting operations at Blaise Farm Quarry. This would increase the yield from individual blasts whilst reducing their frequency.

KEY FACTS ON CURRENT PERMITTED BLASTING

- Standard quarrying practice uses explosives to release such minerals.
- The current permission does not limit the number of blasts but does control the times between which blasting can take place (we blast 3 or 4 times per week, sequenced with Hermitage Quarry).
- Blasting is a source of ground vibration along with railways, road traffic and construction activities.
- The most widespread measure of evaluating vibration produced by rock blasting is Peak Particle Velocity (PPV).
- The PPV for every blast at Blaise Quarry is monitored by Gallagher Aggregates using vibrograph monitors, with results submitted to Kent County Council Mineral Planning for compliance checks.
- The planning permission requires that 95% of blasts produce ground vibration less than 6 mm/s PPV at the vibration limit boundary.
- Blast records demonstrate that blasting activities at Blaise Farm Quarry produce ground vibration of 1mm/s or less at a much closer range than the allowable limit.
- The current permission also imposes a Maximum Instantaneous Charge (MIC) of 10kg of explosive.





PROPOSED CHANGES TO BLASTING OPERATIONS AT BLAISE FARM QUARRY

- We propose to increase the MIC (Maximum Instantaneous Charge) up to 25kg. This would allow us to halve the current number of blasts to one or two per week.
- Increasing the MIC would allow our team greater operational control, dampening noise levels and lessening 'air overpressure' levels. Air overpressure arises from the collapse of the blasted material and is often mistaken for ground vibration. Air overpressure is more pronounced in certain atmospheric conditions.
- We are confident in maintaining the ground vibration levels below 1.5mm/s, one quarter of the 6mm/s allowed by the existing planning permission.
- In agreement with the mineral planning department we propose to undertake six trial blasts over ten weeks at the increased MIC of up to 25kg and collate the results. These will be mixed with normal blasts to help determine both technical and perceived differences between the two.
- We will discuss the results of these trials with representatives of the local parish councils and the mineral planning authority before deciding whether to formally apply for a variation in the current MIC condition.



Gallagher Aggregates Ltd is part of Gallagher Group, Kent's premier building, civil engineering, quarrying and property business. We have an enviable reputation for doing things properly and getting things done whilst carefully considering the local community and the environment.

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