

**Agenda Item:** 8  
**Report to:** Planning, Transportation & Environment Committee  
**Date:** Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020  
**Subject:** Blast Report  
**Summary:** Background into the blasting at Blaise Farm Quarry

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**Decision**

**To consider response to residents regarding impact of the blasts at Blaise Farm Quarry.**

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There has been a flurry of residents' complaints regarding the effects felt from the blasts at Blaise Farm Quarry on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

The main concern is that the blasts have the potential to cause structural damage to properties in Kings Hill. Residents have also commented that they believe there has not been any surveys conducted of the ground in Kings Hill since 2006 in order to evaluate the negative impact that these blasts may be causing.

Residents reporting the increased impact reside at the following locations:-

Stirling Road  
Alton Avenue  
Worcester Avenue

Borough Councillor Kim Tanner copied the parish council into correspondence showing that she has asked TMBC Planning and Environmental Services to undertake an investigation.

County Councillor Matthew Balfour reported on the issue of the blasts at Blaise Farm at the parish council meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020. He explained that he understood that the blast sizes were within Government guidelines and in line with the planning permission given. Cllr Balfour recommended that residents take photographs of the damage to their properties and advise their buildings insurance company of the issue.

**Background**

In 2017 Blaise Farm applied for Request for a Scoping Opinion relating to the proposed variation of condition 18 of planning permission TM/88/1002 to allow an increase in the maximum instantaneous charge when blasting from 10kg to 25kg at Blaise Farm Quarry, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent.

Offham Parish Council responded as follows:

*As you are aware from previous communications, the Parish Council already receives complaints from residents about the impact of the current blasting taking place at Blaise Farm Quarry - primarily the problem of vibrations.*

*Complaints are getting worse as blasting moves closer to the village, and that can only be made worse by a 150% increase in the maximum instantaneous charge.*

*The Parish Council asks that as part of this scoping opinion:*

*1. A Geotech Survey is carried out to establish where the fault lines are so the impact of the blasting on the village can be accurately assessed. It is important to know where the fault lines are which allow the transmission of vibrations through the village. Sometimes a blast can have no effect in one location but a big impact in another. For example, at times the vibrations are hardly noticed, other times they are felt strongly in a limited area and on some occasions they are felt throughout the Village from the western end of Teston Road to The Green and as far as Aldon Lane.*

*2. A previous scoping assessment decided that the current blasts were within prescribed limits, and the recent response to Parish Council complaints about noise and vibrations has indicated that everything is again within prescribed limits - yet residents are continuing to suffer from problems caused by vibrations. With that in mind, are there any other tests that should be carried out to monitor these concerns in addition to those already carried out. For example, can over pressure be regularly monitored?*

*3. Vibration sensors should be put in certain areas of the village to establish the nature and extent of the problem?*

*4. An Environmental Assessment should be carried out.*

Kings Hill Parish Council responded as follows:

*Kings Hill Parish Council have concerns regarding the above proposed variation of condition 18 of planning permission TM/88/1002 to allow an increase in the maximum instantaneous charge when blasting from 10kg to 25kg at Blaise Farm Quarry and would like to comment that:-*

*Kings Hill Parish Council have concerns about the increased charge proposed as residents already feel the impact of the 10Kg blasts significantly.*

*The Council would like more monitoring on Kings Hill to take place before any increase in charge is considered.*

*The Council would like more information on the actual location of the*

*monitoring stations.*

*There is insufficient notice of blasts given to Kings Hill residents and could confirmation that the trial blasts carried out were actually on the dates given -In September 2011, Blast Log Ltd was commissioned by Gallagher Aggregates to independently monitor three test blasts carried out on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2011, 13th March 2012 and 22nd March 2012 at Blaise Farm Quarry, West Malling, Kent.*

## **Monitoring**

A Condition of the Planning Permission requires that all blasts are monitored for vibration and these are reported to KCC. The results of the blasts can be viewed on the KCC website via this link:

<https://www.kentplanningapplications.co.uk/Planning/Display/BLAST%20MONITORING%20RESULTS%20BLAISE%20FARM%20QUARRY>

In an email shared with the parish council Borough Councillor Chris Brown approached TMBC Environmental Health for guidance and was provided with the following (an extract from an email sent from a TMBC Officer to a resident):

“With respect to any structural damage that may be caused to your property, I would recommend that you contact your building insurer; they will be best placed to advise on that specific matter. I would however recommend taking photographs of your home, so that any subsequent damage can be evidenced. Unfortunately, the Environmental Protection team do not become involved in matters relating to structural damage.”

## **Decision**

**To consider response to residents regarding impact of the blasts at Blaise Farm Quarry.**

Contact Officer: Georgina Jackson, Deputy Clerk

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020