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We welcome correspondence in Welsh and corresponding with us in Welsh will not lead to a delay. Let us know your language choice if Welsh or bilingual



Carolyn Thomas MS,  
Chair Petitions Committee  
Welsh Parliament  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

**CC:** Heledd Fychan MS; Rhys ab Owen MS; Andrew RT Davies MS; Joel James MS; Vikki Howells MS; Mick Antoniw MS; Hefin David MS; Llyr Gruffydd MS; Mark Isherwood MS; Delyth Jewell MS.

14 February 2025

Dear Carolyn,

**Re: Petition P-06-1476 1000-meter mandatory buffer zone for all new and existing quarries**

Thank you for your letter dated 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024 concerning the above petition, considered by the Petitions Committee at its meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

The petition proposes a mandatory buffer zone of at least 1000 meters for all new and existing quarries from all residential areas, schools, hospitals, and care facilities. This is a matter of planning policy and is reserved to Welsh Government to determine. As this is not a matter for this Council, I will confine my comments to your request for detailed information of what actions the Council is taking to deal with residents' concerns, engagement with the site operator and the arrangements for community liaison.

One of the key roles for the Council in terms of dealing with the concerns of residents who live in vicinity of Craig yr Hesg quarry is to ensure that the conditions imposed on the planning permission granted by Welsh Government are adhered to. A number of those conditions are imposed specifically to mitigate the impact of the quarry operations on the living conditions of residents. These conditions include matters relating to screening bunds, noise levels, light pollution, how and when blasting and excavation can be undertaken, how and when HGVs enter and leave the site, dust management plans, where and how crushing and screening machinery can operate, etc.

The Council has and will continue to actively monitor the site and works closely with the relevant consultants appointed by the quarry operators to ensure that all conditions are complied with. As of today, there are no breaches of planning control at the quarry and all relevant conditions are being adhered to.

It is also important that residents are given the confidence that these conditions are being complied with and officers of the Council have met regularly with residents to understand their concerns and provide information and assurances around how the conditions on the planning permission are being dealt with.

One of the requests from residents in these meetings was around the potential of some form of online portal being introduced that allowed them to see up to date information on the conditions and other planning issues. In response we have developed a bespoke webpage for the quarry development that residents can access at any time. The information on the webpages has been developed in consultation with residents and is now ready to go live. Examples of what is included are shown in the appendix to this letter. In addition, the Council has provided residents with a dedicated email address to send all queries they have on Craig Yr Hesg, which is then monitored by relevant officers.

In addition to its role in respect of compliance with the Quarry's planning consent the Council also has a regulatory role to ensure the operator of Craig Yr Hesg quarry achieves compliance with their environmental permit as well as a broader responsibility to monitor local air quality to understand the impact the quarry has on the air quality of Glyncoch.

With respect to its local air quality management obligations, the Council monitors, reports and undertakes the statutory assessment of ambient levels in outside air of Particulate Matter PM<sub>10</sub>. Investment by the Council in 2023 enabled the monitoring of both PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>, at a location within Glyncoch. The Council monitors and reports levels in outside air of Particulate Matter PM<sub>2.5</sub> at Glyncoch but the statutory assessment of PM<sub>2.5</sub> is undertaken by Welsh Government.

The Council currently undertakes the monitoring of Particulate Matter at a location along Garth Avenue, Glyncoch (site 130), with continuous results of the levels of PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub> provided in near real-time at <https://www.airquality.gov.wales/air-pollution/site/RHD7>. The Council routinely evaluates and assesses its air quality monitoring data to enable consideration of compliance to the relevant Air Quality Objective for PM<sub>10</sub>. The Council produces an annual air quality report which includes an analysis of monitoring undertaken at Glyncoch and the latest published report is available via the Council website at <https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Business/LicencesandPermits/Pollutionrelatedlicences/RelatedDocuments/RCTCBC2023ProgressReport.pdf>. The 2024 Progress Report is currently going through the Council's approval process with a view to carrying out a public consultation in the coming months.

The selection process for the air quality monitoring equipment at Garth Avenue was made in line with the duty of the Council to consider compliance with the relevant Air Quality Objectives for PM<sub>10</sub> as detailed in the relevant Air Quality legislation/Statutory Guidance set by Welsh Government. With regards to the siting of monitoring location RCTCBC/130, Garth Avenue was identified as being an area likely representative of local conditions which were most consistently impacted by relevant activities associated with Craig Yr Hesg Quarry, particularly the operation of the primary crusher. On choosing this location regard was given to several factors set out in statutory guidance, including the presence of a relevant population, distance from and elevation to identified potential sources of PM<sub>10</sub>, topography of the urban environment, prevailing weather, logistical arrangements, and access requirements.

In respect to standards of the monitoring equipment used, the apparatus and method has been certified by Mcerts and is included on the 'UK Approval of Particulate Matter Monitoring Instruments' list, as a monitoring method that is equivalent to the European Reference Method which is a requirement the Council also needed to consider. The latest monitoring data indicates compliance with the current Air Quality Objective. Notwithstanding this, the Council will continue to monitor in Glyncoch and routinely reviews its air quality monitoring network to enable any required changes to the evolving air quality situation, whilst having regard to its statutory duties.

In respect of permitting requirements set by Welsh Government, the Council regulates the emission of pollution to air from certain processing activities at Craig Yr Hesg quarry via a Part B Environmental Permit. The Permit exists separately from any planning consent, which may be amended from time to time to reflect current practices and statutory guidance. The Council continues to engage with the Operator of Craig Yr Hesg quarry about environmental performance. This engagement may occur because of a specific concern that has been received via the Community or the Operator. In addition, visits take place because of a scheduled programme of inspections to check compliance with conditions of the environmental permit.

The situation at Glyncoch and the impact of Craig Yr Hesg Quarry on local air quality, remains of significant interest to the Council and the work that members of the community have been able to undertake to enable them to form their own independent understanding of the situation is acknowledged. Should a resident believe they are experiencing a direct dust disturbance as a result of a specific event or observed ongoing action, it would assist if as much detail as possible is sent to [EnvironmentalPollution@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:EnvironmentalPollution@rctcbc.gov.uk), whereby the Council can consider the matter further to determine if there are any relevant enforcement actions which could be progressed.

As you have alluded to in your letter, one of the conditions of planning consent requires the formation of a site liaison committee/group. The setting up of such a group has not been without its challenges and it has been necessary to first rebuild trust between the community, the quarry operators, and this Council.

To address this issue, and at the request of the local ward member, the Council has held a series of meetings with representatives of the community to respond to their concerns and to move towards a position where a community liaison group can be established. These meetings have been led by the Council's Chief Executive, supported by relevant senior officers of the Council and a Consultant in Public Health from Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB. In addition to community representatives, Elected Members and Members of the Senedd have been in attendance.

Significant progress has been made. On 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024, the Council hosted a joint meeting with representatives of the community and, for the first time, officials from the quarry operator. There is now agreement on draft terms of reference for a site liaison group being formally established. We are therefore expecting a series of site liaison group meetings to take place on a quarterly basis going forward and arrangements are now being made for the appointment of an independent chair and for the first formal community liaison group meeting to take place.

I trust the above information provides the committee with assurance that the Council is taking its statutory obligations seriously in properly discharging its regulatory role. The Council acknowledges the distress and anxiety that the expansion of the quarry has caused the community of Glyncoch and is doing everything it can to work with the community, the quarry operator, community leaders and other stakeholders to address their concerns and establish effective community liaison arrangements at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

*A. Morgan*

**Andrew Morgan, OBE**

**Arweinydd ac Aelod o'r Cabinet ar faterion Isadeiledd a Buddsoddi**

Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment

**Cynghorydd y Fwrdeistref Sirol dros Ward Aberpennar**

County Borough Councillor for the Mountain Ash Ward

Swyddfa'r Cabinet, 2 Llys Cadwyn, Stryd y Taf

Cabinet Office, 2 Llys Cadwyn, Taff Street, Pontypridd, CF37 4TH

Ebost/Email: [Andrew.Morgan2@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.Morgan2@rctcbc.gov.uk)



**MAE EICH DATA O BWYS** [www.rctcbc.gov.uk/diogeludata](http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/diogeludata)  
**YOUR DATA MATTERS** [www.rctcbc.gov.uk/dataprotection](http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/dataprotection)



## APPENDIX 1 Craig Yr Hesg Quarry Webpages

See screen shots below. Each page contains:

- Blasting – an overview of what is allowed in terms of blasting and a copy of the blast spreadsheet provided by Heidelberg Materials
- Planning conditions – an overview of what is contained within a Live Decision Notice and links to the Inspectors report, Welsh Ministers decision and our Public Access where residents can view each Discharge of Conditions application and Live Decision Notice.
- Investigation updates – this page will contain details of issues raised by residents, what we have done in terms of investigating and the status.
- Air Quality – Links to <https://www.airquality.gov.wales/air-pollution/site/RHD7> and [https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Business/LicencesandPermits/Pollutionrelatedlicences/Airquality.aspx?\\_gl=1\\*\\_prqzwx\\*\\_gcl\\_au\\*MTI3Nzc1OTg5My4xNzMxMzI3NzMz](https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Business/LicencesandPermits/Pollutionrelatedlicences/Airquality.aspx?_gl=1*_prqzwx*_gcl_au*MTI3Nzc1OTg5My4xNzMxMzI3NzMz)
- Community Liaison Group – Dates and times of meetings and minutes (where minutes are available)

### Craig Yr Hesg

Craig Yr Hesg Quarry is a long established quarry which commenced operations in the 1890's.

The quarry is located approximately 1KM north of Pontypridd, adjacent to the village of Glyncoch.

The site is has a two way access via the B4273 Ynysybwl Road adjacent to Rogart Terrace. Existing quarry operations are focussed on the western part of the quarry with operations progressing in a north westerly direction. The processing plant is located in the eastern part of the quarry.

Continuation of works at the existing facility and permission for the extension of the quarry was granted by The Welsh Ministers on 11th October 2022 following a Public Inquiry.



#### Blasting

Information about the monitoring of blasting at the quarry.

[Blasting](#)



#### Planning Conditions

View planning conditions that have been satisfied and discharged.

[Planning](#)



#### Investigation Updates

View latest investigation updates and details of how to report

[Investigation](#)



#### Air Quality

Provisional results of local air quality monitoring from Air Quality Wales along with The Council's annual air quality progress report.

[Reports](#)



#### Community Liaison Group

View minutes from past meetings and details of upcoming liaison meetings.



#### Debate on a Member's Legislative Proposal

A bill relating to planning processes for quarry development - [Plenary - Wednesday, 16 October 2024 13.307](#)

#### Contact us:

Email: [Craigyrhesg\\_planning@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:Craigyrhesg_planning@rctcbc.gov.uk)

# Blasting

In approving continued operations at the quarry, The Welsh Ministers were satisfied that blasting could be controlled so as to comply with the limits set out in current national planning policy Minerals Technical Advice Note (MTAN) 1: aggregates. This is achieved through the application of planning conditions setting upper acceptable limits for noise and vibration. Specifically, these require:

Blasting is only to take place at the quarry between 1000 and 1600 hours Monday to Friday and not at all on Saturday Sunday and Bank Holidays, (other than in an emergency).

Each individual blast is to be monitored in accordance with the agreed blast monitoring scheme with all monitoring undertaken in accordance with the terms of the scheme.

No secondary blasting is to be carried out at the site.

All individual blasts are to be designed managed and implemented to minimise the extent of air overpressure resulting from the blast. If air overpressure exceeds 120db, at any nearby sensitive residential property the Local Planning Authority are to be informed within 7 days and the design management and implementation of blasts to be reviewed prior to any further blasting taking place, with future blasting being undertaken in accordance with the findings of the review.

## **Please also note:**

- Blasting times are to be clearly advertised at the quarry.
- A warning audible at the site boundary shall be sounded before and after blasting.
- Blasting times shall be clearly advertised on the operator's website at least 24 hours in advance of blasting occurring
- Blasting shall be advertised on social media channels at least 24 hours in advance of blasting occurring.

## **Craig Yr Hesg Blasting Database (redacted)**

[View our Blasting Vibration Database](#)

# Planning Conditions

The Live Decision notice for Craig Yr Hesg details the original conditions of the appeal decision and includes details within it of each condition which has been satisfied and therefore discharged.

The details of the condition will look like the table below which shows:

Details agreed: Wording from the condition being discharged.

- Application number: this is the planning reference number for the discharge of condition application (you can use the first 6 digits of this reference to search for the application on the online register - Simple Search (rctcbc.gov.uk)).
- Decision date: the date the condition was discharged.
- Deciding Authority: the authority approving the discharge of condition.
- Revision Number: v.1 is the original consent. v.2, v.3 etc will follow on as conditions are discharged.
- Notes: this won't appear on all discharge of conditions but may appear to give additional information or clarification.

<b>Details agreed</b>	Scheme of seeding and woodland planting of the Northern Screening Landform and preparation of the Western Screen Bund
<b>Application Number</b>	23/0388/38
<b>Decision Date</b>	25/03/2024
<b>Deciding Authority</b>	Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC
<b>Revision number</b>	v.2

Live Decisions are uploaded to the original application (in this instance 15/0666) and to the specific planning reference for the discharge of condition.

	<a href="#">Live decision notice (planning references 240487DIS, 240180DIS and 240388DIS)</a>  236 Kb
	<a href="#">Welsh Ministers decision letter</a>  451 Kb
	<a href="#">Inspectors Report</a>  1.42 Mb
	<a href="#">Refusal of Full Planning Permission</a>  116 Kb

# Investigation Updates

## Slow worms

The Council's Ecologist has been visiting the site to witness progress of the site's vegetation clearance, wall demolitions and start of site strip works, as they relate to the reptile mitigation requirement of the related discharged planning condition.

As a result, the Council's Ecologist has been emailed with progress updates by Heidelberg Materials (which have been copied to the Craig Yr Hesg RCT email and colleagues). Based on his site visit experience, and the email progress updates provided, he is confident that the reptile mitigation that was approved through planning condition has been implemented appropriately, but we will continue to monitor the welfare of the slow worms (and other species) throughout the development.

**Status: Case closed August 2024**

## Bunds

We are aware that construction of the bunds at the boundary of the site have been a recent cause for concern to residents and this issue is currently being investigated. Some concern has also been expressed that material from within the existing quarry has been used for the formation of the bunds. However, following investigations it has been established that it is within the terms of the permission granted.

Heidelberg Materials have advised that construction work on the bunds may result in limited access to the surrounding land for approximately four weeks.

**Status: Open. Checks to be carried out once the bunds have been constructed**

## How to report a planning breach?

If you think a problem exists you can report the issue to us online:

[VIEW OUR PLANNING ENFORCEMENT WEBPAGE TO FIND OUT MORE >](#)

## Air Quality

### [Airquality.gov.wales](https://airquality.gov.wales)

Up-to-date provisional results of local air quality monitoring on the external website Air Quality in Wales. (Please note this is provisional data, which may be subject to change as it is subsequently validated, ratified)

### [RCTCBC Air Quality Webpage](#)

The Council's annual air quality progress report.

## Useful links:

- [Craig-yr-Hesg quarry community webpage](#)
- <https://www.cleanairhub.org.uk/>
- [Statutory nuisance](#)
- [Environmental permitting](#)

### **The planning application submitted to Rhondda Cynon Taf Planning -**

- [15/0666/FUL](#) | Western extension to existing quarry to include the phased extraction of an additional 10 million tonnes of pennant sandstone, construction of screening bunds, associated works and operations, and consolidation of all previous mineral planning permissions at Craig Yr Hesg Quarry, including an extension of the end date for quarrying and an overall restoration scheme (additional information submitted "Wellbeing and Environmental Health Issues" report) | [Craig Yr Hesg Quarry Berw Road Pontypridd CF37 3BG \(rctcbc.gov.uk\)](#)

### **Discharge of Conditions applications -**

- [24/1123/DIS](#) | Discharge of condition 23(d) Blasting. | [Craig Yr Hesg Quarry Berw Road Pontypridd Rhondda Cynon Taf CF37 3BG](#)
- [24/0487/DIS](#) - Discharge of condition 15 details of construction of the path (15/0666/10) | [Craig Yr Hesg Quarry Berw Road Pontypridd CF37 3BG \(rctcbc.gov.uk\)](#)
- [24/0180/DIS](#) | Discharge of Conditions 31 Revised Noise Management and Monitoring Scheme, 37 Archaeology Written Scheme of Investigation & 49 Scheme for seeding and management of soil storage bunds of previous planning permission 15/0666/10 | [Craig Yr Hesg Quarry Berw Road Pontypridd CF37 3BG \(rctcbc.gov.uk\)](#)
- [23/0388/DIS](#) | Discharge of condition 7 Species Protection and Habitat Management Plan, 38, 38 (a) & 38(b) Habitat Protection plan ref EC1, Tree and Woodland Management Plan, 51 Interim Restoration Scheme, 56 Community Communication and Engagement Strategy (15/0666/10) | [Craig Yr Hesg Quarry Berw Road Pontypridd CF37 3BG \(rctcbc.gov.uk\)](#)