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Press Release For immediate release. 1 October 2003

National Park National Disgrace! Save Longstone Edge Group opposes renewed activity at Backdale Quarry

Backdale quarry in Longstone Edge, about four miles north of Bakewell, has recently seen renewed quarrying for aggregates by Bleaklow Industries, which the Group believes is in contravention of the mineral permission. The beauty and tranquillity of the Peak District is threatened.

In an earlier phase, extraction ceased in 1998 when the then operators, RMC, withdrew after a sustained public protest campaign, much of it organised by the Save Longstone Edge group. Subsequently, complex legal actions left matters unresolved with the owners still claiming a right to quarry limestone, whilst the planning authority (Peak District National Park PDNPA) and all environmental groups are convinced the permission did not allow this.

The relevant minerals permission, granted in 1952, allows the extraction of ³fluorspar, barytes and any other minerals². This permission is typical of a vein minerals operation whereby the land is restored to former levels by replacing the limestone after the extraction of the minerals, a traditional technique that is permitted under current planning guidelines. Bleaklow Industries on the other hand wish to use this permission as an excuse to quarry limestone leaving an enormous unsightly hole. This activity contravenes the permission and must be halted immediately to prevent further damage to the scenery and amenity of the Peak District.

It is now the responsibility of the PDNPA as planning authority to take urgent enforcement action to ensure that the terms of the permission are not breached.

Statements by Bleaklow Industries show they have long-term plans for much greater exploitation of the permission beyond the immediate Backdale quarry site. The Save Longstone Edge group will remain vigilant in case these plans are resurrected.

(ends)

Notes for editors:

1. The Save Longstone Edge Group, with 700 households as members, was set up in 1997 to protect the Edge from damage by quarrying. For more information contact the secretary Julian Tippett tel/fax:01433 631624 email: jutippett@waitrose.com

2. JPEG pictures of the site are available by email. Thumbnails attached. Captions: Longstone1 and Longstone2: Views of renewed workings

Longstone3: Area at risk on Longstone Edge (quarry face superimposed)
Longstone4: View of area at risk.

3. The 1952 minerals permission refers to “any other minerals”. The landowner interprets this phrase as permitting the quarrying of limitless quantities of limestone. The Group believes that “any other minerals” was intended to refer to calcite, lead and the like. The quantity of limestone taken should be limited to the amount which has to be released to get at the fluorspar etc. This question of interpretation has yet to be tested in the courts.

4. The Save Longstone Edge group is campaigning in collaboration with the Campaign to Protect Rural England and the Council for National Parks.