

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK PRESS RELEASE

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Authority takes strong action on Backdale Quarry...

The Peak District National Park Authority has today taken further firm and decisive legal action against the owners and operators of Backdale Quarry. The move signals the Authority's firm intention to prevent unlawful quarrying from restarting at the site, on Longstone Edge near Bakewell.

The enforcement and stop notices, issued today against operator MMC Mineral Processing Ltd and landowners Bleaklow Industries Ltd, come into effect tomorrow (Tuesday 9 May).

Under the terms of the notices, all operations must stick to the terms of a 1952 planning consent, which states that limestone can only be quarried in the course of extracting vein minerals such as fluorspar and barytes.

In November 2004 the National Park Authority - concerned that MMC Ltd was breaking the terms of the planning consent and unlawfully extracting huge amounts of limestone - served an initial enforcement notice (see 'note to editors').

The company appealed and a planning inquiry was set up to resolve the issue. However, in March 2006 the inquiry was cancelled after Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott declared the Authority's legal action 'null and void' in the light of a similar case in Wales.

Following the cancellation the National Park Authority moved swiftly to impose a temporary stop notice on the site, giving it time to decide its next course of action. The temporary notice has just run out - and the new enforcement and stop notices issued today will remain in place while the Authority continues to pursue resolution of the issues surrounding the future of Backdale.

Peak District National Park Authority Chair of Planning, Narendra Bajaria, said: "Today we have entered a significant new stage in the legal process.

"The new enforcement and stop notices signal our commitment to continue to do everything in our power to protect Longstone Edge. Over recent months there has been virtually no new quarrying activity in the disputed areas of Backdale.

"We would like to thank the community and interest groups for bearing with us as we prepared the latest legal notices. Their continuing support will be crucial as we continue to look to the future."

Note to editors: The 1952 planning consent for Backdale gives permission to quarry vein minerals (fluorspar and barytes), and limestone only as a secondary product - taken out in the course of working the vein minerals. However, between July 2003 and December 2005, 573,963 tonnes of limestone were sold from Backdale. Only 11,500 tonnes of fluorspar were extracted - none of it apparently sold.

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