Linhay Hill Quarry Local Liaison Group

Notes of Site Visit

Date and Time:	**2 July 2025 10am**	**Location: On site, see opening paragraph**
Present:	Barry Wilson	Glendinning, Managing Director
	Mark Glendinning	Glendinning, Operations Manager
	Cllr Don Distin	Ashburton Town Council,
	Cllr John Nutley	Teignbridge District Council
	James Aven	Dartmoor National Park Authority
	Elisavita Belova	Environment Agency – Flood and Coastal Risk Management
	Joshua Lewis and Alice Conkerton	Devon County Council – Flood and Coastal Risk Management
	Graham Burge	Alston Cottage
	Chris Tregidgo	South Dartmoor Community College
	Neil Turner	Neighbour
	Helen Squire	Neighbour
	Kevin and Sue Smith	Neighbours
	Ben Mould, Amy Wilson and Mr Wilson	Neighbours
	Anthea Hoey	Glendinning

1. **Venue**

   The arrangement was to meet in the car park at Glentor and combine into as few cars as possible to travel in convoy via Waye Lane and on along the new Alston Farm access lane to a point where there was space to park. From here we walked along the old farm lane to view the preparatory works in progress for Stage 1a of the quarry extension.

   Barry pointed out that on the way he hoped visitors would notice how well the new hedgebanks were growing alongside Waye Lane, and the wildflowers becoming established on the verges. Also, the vegetation in the surface water detention basins.

2. **Stage 1a quarry area**

   We started with the Stage 1a quarry field where, following a 6-week archaeological investigation, the topsoil has been stripped and stored in a bund alongside the northeastern hedge, and stripping of overburden is in progress. The archaeological investigation revealed a few shards of pottery and a flint or two, but nothing of any importance. The findings will be reported to the DNPA shortly.

   Mark explained that the overburden is being stripped in layers by specialist groundworks contractors, using an excavator and four huge dump trucks. The trucks then transport the overburden to the area where the bund is being built alongside the A38.

   The overburden stripping is informed by the results of electromagnetic conductivity mapping surveys and targeted borehole drilling to help determine the depth of overburden and the interface with the limestone. These surveys show that the surface of the limestone is variable, with peaks and troughs, similar to the surface of the limestone above the existing quarry and characteristic of limestone deposits elsewhere.

   The overburden is being stripped in layers starting at approx. 3m and reducing to 1-2m to reveal the top parts of the limestone.

The excavator is positioned on the undug surface, whilst the dump trucks are loaded whilst parked down on the stripped layer, which is a more efficient arrangement. The photo shows a dump truck being loaded in this way.

Once the overburden is dug by the excavator, a dozer levels the dug surface to maintain a level ground area suitable for access by the trucks and subsequently by the drilling rig when the limestone is encountered. The dozer's blade is raised and lowered automatically as it tracks the ground, with the blade height being informed by the results of the mapping surveys stored on a memory stick in the dozer's on-board computer.

Graham Burge asked why the stripping was limited to this one field, rather than being extended over a wider area. Mark explained this was due to a combination of economics - calibrating the up-front cost of stripping with anticipated quarrying progress - and limiting the ecological disturbance to wildlife, particularly dormice, in the hedgebanks and fields.

Mark described how the quarrying in the Stage 1a extension area would be integrated with the quarrying in the existing quarry, with the higher layers of rock from Stage 1a being transported along the southern portion of Alston Lane and down into the existing quarry in dump trucks via a ramp built into the corner of the main quarry. He said he hoped eventually to install a conveyor as a more efficient means of transportation to the processing area.

Here is a photograph of the group taken at this point of the walk.

3. **Stage 1a bund building area**

We then went to the area adjacent to the A38 where the bund is being built. The Stage 1a bund is in two sections, starting from the eastern end. The easternmost section has been completed and topsoiled ready for grass seeding and tree planting later in the year.

The westernmost section was about a third completed, so visitors could see the whole bund building process, with the topsoil already stripped from the bund footprint and stored alongside, followed by the surface of the footprint being ‘keyed in’ ready to receive the overburden itself. The bund is being built progressively westwards in layers of approx. 0.5m thickness. The dump trucks drop the overburden on the active front of the bund and the layers are smoothed with a dozer and compacted with a roller, as can be seen in the photo below.

A dump truck has just dropped its load, and the dozer is starting to level the heaps of overburden. The roller is in the foreground, getting ready to compact the levelled surface. The completed section of bund is visible in the background.

Barry pointed out the perimeter surface water drainage ditch visible on the right-hand side of the above photograph and shown in more detail below:

The ditch is protected by a temporary plastic fence to prevent overburden spilling into it whilst the bund is being built.

On the steeper ground in the distance, leaky stone dams and bales of straw have been placed in the ditch to slow the flow of water to reduce scouring.

During dry weather, a water bowser continuously sprinkles water onto the exposed ground in both the quarry extension area and the bund footprint to minimise the dust.

4. Next steps

Barry explained that he anticipated that Stage 1a would be quarried for between 8-10 years, depending on the rate of sales. After that the Stage 1b quarry area will be started, with the overburden used to build bunds in the fields beyond the Stage 1a bunds.

Then after a further 3-5 years, Stage 2 will begin, with the overburden being placed to the north of and overlapping with the Stage 1b bund. Stage 2 is subdivided into Stage 2a and 2b lasting about 15 or so years altogether.

Meanwhile the existing quarry will be deepened from its current depth to sea level (0m AOD) so that the overburden from Stages 3 and 4 can be backfilled into the base of the quarry without unduly sterilising the underlying limestone.

Stage 5 sees the whole quarry worked out to its maximum possible extent without further increasing the quarry footprint. The whole extension gives the quarry some 60 years additional working reserve. During this time the higher benches will be progressively restored to fit in with the final restoration.

The approximate footprints of quarry extension Stages 1 to 4 and associated bunds for Stages 1 and 2 are illustrated in the diagram below.

The strategy for the final restoration is to turn off the dewatering pumps allowing the quarry void to fill with water to form a lake, with the surrounding area open for informal recreation and nature conservation, and a path created around the edge of the lake. The workshop area will be used for employment. Final details will be agreed with the Dartmoor National Park Authority nearer the time.

Helen Squires asked whether backfilling the base of the quarry could affect any underground flows of water. Barry said this was unlikely as the deeper levels of limestone are very dense and have few if any caves. Those exposed to date in the higher levels were filled with clay anyway.

5. **Date and format/venue of next meeting**

The next Local Liaison Group meeting will be held in autumn of 2025. The date and actual venue/format for this meeting will be decided nearer the time.

Many thanks to all who attended. We hope you found it interesting and useful.