

Keeping you informed...

Welcome to our first community update newsletter, a regular communication for people living close to our Whatley and Westdown quarries. Our aim is to keep you informed about what is happening at our East Mendip operations as well as our plans for the future.

We are committed to being a good neighbour and working constructively with local communities so we can continue to provide vital construction materials while minimising our impact on the areas in which we operate. As we set out in our recent proposals to update permissions for Westdown, our vision in the East Mendips is to implement a combined approach across the two quarries, which will help minimise the impact of our operations, benefiting neighbouring communities.

Our overarching principle is that the operations of both quarries, including mineral volumes and vehicle movements, will not exceed the current levels for Whatley. We plan to do this by using Westdown's location, close to key road routes, to supply local demand, freeing up the rail link at Whatley to allow more material

for national markets to go by rail. These combined steps will cut our carbon footprint and reroute vehicles away from local villages.

What's more, our proposals for Westdown quarry will also deliver a transformative legacy project through the restoration of the adjacent Asham Wood (see Westdown update on page 3).

We believe that this dual approach offers real benefits to the East Mendips. We're committed to keeping local people updated about our proposals and, when Covid regulations permit, we'll be more active in engaging with local people and stakeholders.

In the meantime, if you have any queries, or would like to get in touch, please use the contact details on page 4.

Ian Strachan
Strategic development manager



Whiteboard donation supports learning

The pupils of Mells Church of England First School have a new look classroom thanks to the installation of a £2,900 interactive whiteboard funded by Hanson.

The board is an essential tool for teaching and learning as it allows images from a computer screen to be projected for the whole class to view at the same time.

"With pupils returning to the classroom fulltime following the pandemic, the whiteboard is proving invaluable in helping to develop the children's problem-solving skills," said head teacher, Claire Chantler. Hanson's strategic development manager Ian Strachan added: "Teaching methods have changed since I was at school, but it's great to know that we are supporting the pupils to get the most from their learning."

Year two pupils and class teacher Lucy Pearce-Bailey (right), plus head teacher Claire Chantler are thrilled with the addition of an interactive whiteboard at Mells Church of England First School

Ash dieback has caused the widespread loss of ash trees and is now affecting woodlands, paths and gardens closer to home. Already over 2,500 diseased trees have been identified in the Mendip Hills.

Woodland management

Experts believe that up to 95 per cent of UK ash trees could fall victim to ash dieback, which causes leaf loss and crown dieback and can lead to death or windthrow of affected trees.

This serious disease is unfortunately affecting ash trees on our Westdown and Whatley quarry sites as well as land we own adjacent to the river at Vallis Vale.

In light of this, at Asham Wood, where the proposals to reopen the adjacent Westdown quarry will include restoring some of the adjacent Asham void to provide a buffer of new tree planting around the core ancient wood, we will be working with the Forestry Commission and Natural England to review our woodland management plans.

In addition to necessary tree felling along footpaths, we are also considering our coppicing regime and if planting replacement trees is appropriate. At Vallis Vale, we are applying for a tree felling licence to remove trees posing a safety risk and, at Whatley, we are keeping close watch on impacted trees.

Principal landscape manager, Andy Duncan, said: "It's not just about managing diseased and hazardous trees: with ash dieback we also have to think about protecting the overall integrity of our woodlands to ensure we maintain their ecological functionality."

Woodland at Whatley with signs of ash dieback disease



Widening group membership

We are seeking to broaden the local membership of our liaison group, which meets quarterly to discuss our operations and future thinking. If you represent a local group and would like it to be considered for membership, please email us at: whatley.quarry@hanson.com

Recent meetings have been online, but from June onwards these sessions will follow a hybrid format combining online and/or meeting in person at the Whatley quarry offices. All meeting minutes can be viewed on our website.

Our proposals to update the existing planning consents for Westdown quarry would secure long-term sustainable supplies of vital construction materials and deliver a transformative legacy with the proposed phased restoration of Asham Wood.



Westdown quarry near Nunney

Update on application at Westdown quarry

Thank you to everyone who got in contact and provided constructive feedback in our online pre-application consultation on the future of Westdown quarry.

The quarry has permission for mineral extraction until 2042, but our application to update the existing planning permissions would bring them in line with current standards ahead of restarting operations. We have now submitted our proposals to Somerset County Council and,

subject to approvals, we would aim to restart work in 2022.

Trystan Mabbit, consenting and development manager, said: "Our application at Westdown quarry includes the phased restoration of the adjacent Asham Wood and has been shaped by the need to protect wildlife and reduce the impact of our activities on the environment. The scheme will provide significant environmental and biodiversity benefits as well as enhanced public rights of way."

Ongoing site assessments

As part of our commitment to operate within legislative guidelines on noise and vibration, you may notice some independent specialists in the area carrying out testing.

Nine sites around Whatley are being monitored using highly calibrated technical equipment and once the studies are complete, we will share the findings along with any operational amendments that are identified.

Whatley Wombles

We have resumed litter picking along the grass verges on roads close to our Whatley quarry and have also started a regular pick-up of rubbish, including fly tipped material, around Westdown.

Clean sweep

We have deployed a road sweeper to visit Chantry, Mells and Whatley once a week to ensure local roads are kept as clean as possible.

From left: trainee manager Joanna Hudd, with LEAD apprentices James Brown, Tobias Hooker, Kyle Boyd and Joel O'Connor



Future leaders

Over the last decade Hanson has recruited more than 60 apprentices onto its three-year Leadership Education and Development (LEAD) programme for post-sixth form school-leavers, plus over 35 graduates have joined our trainee manager programme.

Pictured left is the five-strong cohort of LEAD and graduate programme participants currently based at Whatley. Graduate Joanna Hudd said: "Working in the minerals sector offers great training and career progression. I am really excited for the future."

More of the River Mells is being opened up for angling



River opened up for fishing

Wellbeing is a key priority for Hanson and we are extending our association with Frome and District Angling Association (FADAA) to open up more of the river frontage we own to angling.

With fishing participation rates increasing over the last year, we are pleased that our plans include providing a stretch of the River Mells specifically for free fishing for local under 16 year-olds between the duck pond and the weir in Great Elm. Signage is in development and we are grateful to FADAA for their support in rolling out this initiative.

Providing support for local initiatives

Local charities and community groups across the East Mendips have received extensive support during the last year, thanks to our community assistance initiatives.

We're particularly proud that early in the first lockdown we were able to donate vital PPE for use by Somerset Adult Social Care and Support and well as making financial contributions to other worthy local causes, including supporting disabled riders at Divoky Riding School.

Hanson also has a programme of employee volunteering days to work on community projects and recently local activity has included litter picking and maintenance in St Andrew's graveyard in Mells.

For more information on our community support programme, including how to make an application for funding, material donation and/or volunteer support, visit our Whatley quarry community website: www.hanson.co.uk/whatleyquarry



We helped fund a new indoor arena at Divoky Riding School

Hanson UK provides newsletters voluntarily to help the local community keep up to date with our activities relating to our quarries in the East Mendip area. Any personal data you provide will be used only for this purpose. We may share your name and contact details with third parties, including in the distribution of this and future newsletters, but will not use or share your data in any other way. For further information regarding how we process your personal data please refer to our Privacy Policy at www.hanson.co.uk

This newsletter is delivered by hand to around 2,000 homes within an approximate 3km radius on our Whatley and Westdown quarries. Copies are also distributed to local parish councils, Mendip District Council and Somerset County Council.

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Stay safe: stay out

With warmer weather soon upon us, we want to highlight the danger that quarries and, in particular, quarry water, poses to those venturing into sites uninvited. All too often after a fatality, the friends and family of the individual involved say that they were not aware of the risks they were exposing themselves to.

Our industry body, The Mineral Products Association has more detail on this important issue see: www.mineralproducts.org/Issues-and-Campaigns/Stay-Safe.aspx



How to get in touch

You are welcome to contact us with any questions you may have about our operations and we'll respond in a timely way to all who make direct contact with us. You can also let us know if you would like to be added to our database to receive future updates by email. You can reach us at:

☎ 0800 644 4234 or

✉ whatley.quarry@hanson.com