

15-Dec-03:

Archaeological Digs and Mineral Extraction Restrictions

The British Aggregates Association (BAA) are increasingly concerned at further delays and a high cost both financially and in time being experienced by many of their SME members by the imposition of over-the-top pre-application archaeological investigations.

The need for a reasonable rapid and inexpensive search is laid out in planning guidance where there is evidence of significant national important archaeological remains (PPG15) and this is fully supported by the industry. However there has been a trend in the south and East Anglia and more recently in Yorkshire for more onerous conditions that have made several operators consider sterilising the reserve rather than proceeding.

BAA have written to Planning Minister Keith Hill requesting that he review both the guidance - and the application of this guidance by individual mineral planning authorities. We have specifically requested that any archaeological digs be carried-out subsequent to any successful approval of the mineral application but prior to commencement of operations - which would go a long way to resolve the current problems - and most particularly for SME operators as represented by BAA. Clearly we would also need to be clear about the extent and limit of such investigations.

Once again there is evidence that whilst the government remain committed to speeding up the planning process and making it more industry friendly that some local authorities are thwarting this - and not ensuring time limits for consultees are more rigidly enforced.

Enquiries to Peter Huxtable, BAA Secretary, Tel/Fax 01433 639879 Mobile 07711 492378, phuxtable@british-aggregates.com

Notes to editors:

- The British Aggregates Association is the representative trade body for independent quarry operators www.british-aggregates.co.uk
- The Association represents some 60 member companies across the UK producing around 10% of national output from over 100 individual sites; and 20 associate members
- The Association was formed in late 1999 to fight the imposition of the ill-conceived Aggregates Levy and to protect the independent SMEs from increasing dominance from the major operators.

- The Association participates fully with EU and UK consultation on environmental, economic, and health and safety legislation.
- The BAA last year established a Restoration Guarantee Fund for its members to cover environmental liabilities.