

# Appendix 1

## Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog - a network of community Enterprises

### Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog: a network of community enterprises

Date: 06.01.20

Categories: [Featured](#)



We are delighted that Ceri Cunninton and Sel Williams from Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog will be joining us at the [Growing the New Economy](#) convention in Oldham on 12th February, to contribute to the breakout session, **Building from the bottom up**, which will look at how local partnerships are making a real difference.

Thanks are due to Ceri for this blog, which provides an insight into how Cwmni Bro is having a positive impact in its community.

Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog is a pioneering development in Wales; a network of successful community enterprises which have come together to co-operate under the banner of

one overarching community company.

The company operates in the communities of Blaenau Ffestiniog, Trawsfynydd and Penrhyndeudraeth, as well as nearby villages, which between them have a population of about 8,000 people. Blaenau Ffestiniog was the second largest town in north Wales in 1900 with a population of about 13,000 people but, as the slate industry declined, the population had more than halved by the year 2000. Blaenau Ffestiniog is now one of the economically poorest areas in the United Kingdom. Despite the de-industrialisation, a cultural legacy survives, upon which an integrated and holistic model of community development is being pioneered by Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog.

There are more social enterprises per head of the population in Bro Ffestiniog than anywhere else in Wales. Thirteen of the area's social enterprises have come together under the banner of Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog.

The diverse activities of these ventures include running two hotels, shops, restaurants, cafes, tourist information centre, leisure centre, arts and crafts workshop, mountain biking centre, retail, horticulture, energy production projects, developing allotments, educational and cultural activities, opera, environmental projects, energy saving promotion, reducing food waste, recycling, river cleaning, work with adults with supplementary needs, youth work, including homelessness and teaching environmental and media skills.

The company's aims are to promote co-operation between the constituent social enterprises, nurture new social enterprises and work with small business enterprises which are anchored in the community. All of this is in order to promote the environmental, economic, social and cultural development of the area.

Between them, Cwmni Bro's members employ some 150 people. A recent analysis of their economic impact showed that a high percentage of their income comes from trading. Further, this income largely stayed and circulated in the area. For every pound received as a grant or loan, a significant proportion, 98 pence, was spent locally, mainly on wages. Much of the £1.5 million wages is retained locally. Nearly half the expenditure on goods and services was local and thus circulated money in the area.

In August 2018, a new venture was launched, BROcast Ffestiniog; a community digital broadcasting service, aimed at facilitating communication between the social enterprises and the community and within the community (See [BROcast Ffestiniog-YouTube](#) and [facebook.com/BROcast Ffestiniog](#)).

The integrated and holistic model of community development which Cwmni Bro is pioneering offers a pattern other communities can emulate. Cwmni Bro responds positively to invitations to visit other communities to explain what has been achieved in Bro Ffestiniog and to discuss the general potential of this model of community development.

The model presents a challenge to government in Wales; to develop policies and appropriate support in order to facilitate the adoption of this model of community development across Wales.

### CONTACT

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[CwmniBro@CwmniBro.Cymru](mailto:CwmniBro@CwmniBro.Cymru)

[www.cwmnibro.cymru](http://www.cwmnibro.cymru)

Twitter: [@cwmnibro](#)

To find out more about the convention and to book, please [click here](#).



Email: [REDACTED]

21<sup>st</sup> January 2025

To whom it may concern.

I write to the Welsh Assembly to oppose the Denbigh Quarry planning extension application submitted by Breedon's Southern Ltd.

This planning application has been previously unanimously rejected by members of the local planning council.

By destroying the area in question, with its natural beautiful habitat, scenery and tranquillity would be devastating for all the people's pleasure.

There are lovely public walkways to be had in the above proposed natural conversational area, which is so very valued by the community and was evidently noted during the Covid 19 epidemic.

The dust pollution released into the atmosphere, the noise and tremor disturbances had from the Quarry blasting's and workings again would be catastrophic!


As for the Quarry site itself, they employ about five people, not one hundred as previously quoted by Breedon's.

It would be a criminal act if the Quarry planned extension was given the consent to go ahead and would disappoint most people living locally.

Yours sincerely,

K.Needham





4<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

Breedon Trading Limited,  
Denbigh Quarry site,  
Craig Road,  
Denbigh.

To, the person who is overall responsible for 'monitoring the severity of the Quarry blasting' carried out at the Breedon Denbigh Quarry site, Craig Road, Denbigh.

Whilst I was at home on the Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> ~~February~~<sup>January</sup> 2025, the 'noise and ground vibration' resulting from this Quarry blast was extremely frightening and concerning. This is voiced too, by my many fellow household residents.


This Quarry blast gauge reading is obviously 'far too high' and really does need to be reviewed and reduced to a 'much lower' severity degree.

This is the second time I have raised this concern with Breedon Quarry.

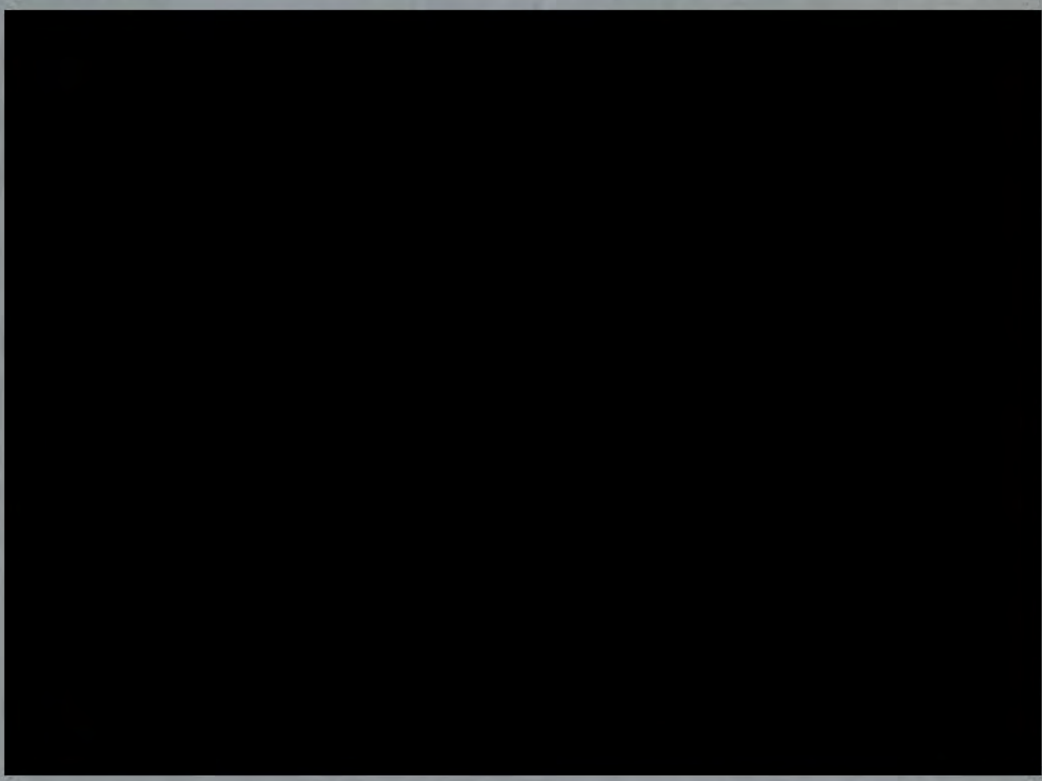
I look forward to your response.

Your sincerely

K. Needham

Sent To Maria Cotton by 





4<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

Breedon Trading Limited,

Denbigh Quarry Site,

Craig Road,

Denbigh.

(Regarding the follow on from my previous concerns in relation to the severity of the blasting carried out at the Denbigh Quarry Site).

To Maria Cotton,

I wrote a letter (dated 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025) addressed to the Denbigh Quarry Site, which I hand delivered to this site. This letter highlighted the blasting severity carried out on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January 2025 at the Denbigh Quarry Site.

I too, had previously contacted (by phone) the Breedon Denbigh Quarry Site in relation to the severity of blasting carried out at the Denbigh Quarry Site on the 20<sup>th</sup> of August 2024.

I have had no response yet from a Breedon spokesperson into my concerns mentioned above.

Therefore, for a third time of asking I would appreciate a response from a Breedon Quarry spokesperson on this matter.

Kind regards,

K.Needham.

Oliver Poole

O.P. 4-4-25



14<sup>th</sup> April

Maria Cotton

Spoke to me on the phone

and would email me

her response

to reply back



02/05/2025

Denbighshire County Council,  
Head of the Planning Department,  
Wynnstay Road,  
Ruthin.

Regarding – The severity of blasting carried out at the Breedon's Ltd Denbigh Quarry Site.

To whom this may concern,

I write to the Denbighshire County Council as I have been informed by a Breedon's Ltd Quarry spokesperson that the above Quarry send their blast readings to the Denbighshire County Council planning department for monitoring purposes.

Therefore, I wish to bring my above concern to the attention of the Denbighshire County Council planning department.

The severity of blasting carried out at the above Quarry site is far too severe and needs to be reviewed, as this causes huge disturbances for the Denbigh residents.

I have previously written to the Breedon's Quarry site informing them of my above concern, highlighting the Denbigh Quarry blasting dates.

I am currently awaiting a response from a Maria Cotton (Breedon's Denbigh Quarry Spokesperson).



Yours sincerely,

K. Needham

PS I look forward to Donbighire  
County Council response on  
this matter.



Eich cyf/Your ref:  
Ein cyf/Our ref:  
Dyddiad/Date: 08 May 2025  
Rhif Uniongyrchol/Direct dial: 01824 706727

[REDACTED]

Dear Sir

**Re: The severity of blasting carried out at the Breedon's Ltd Denbigh Quarry Site.**

I write in response to your letter dated 02.05.2025 concerning the blasting activities conducted at Denbigh Quarry. Thank you for taking the time to share your observations.

The council understand that quarry blasting can be disruptive and can raise concerns in the local community. As you are aware, the quarry monitor blasts and provide the data to the council for monitoring purposes.

The impacts from blasts are controlled by planning conditions at the site which set limits on ground vibration and secure best-practice measures to minimise ground vibration and air over-pressure.

In addition to the blast monitoring carried out by the operator, the council also carry out monitoring of a number of blasts carried out across the county annually. The blast carried out on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025 was monitored by the council and was within the limits set by planning conditions. The council is not aware of a breach of the limits set by planning conditions within the last 12 months.

Notwithstanding the above, I note your concern over the impacts of the blast regardless of any limits set by planning and your call for a review.

You may be aware that an application to extend the quarry was submitted in 2019 and was subsequently refused by Denbighshire County Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024. That decision has been appealed by the operator and a public inquiry is to be held this summer. Comments upon the appeal were due to have been submitted to Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW) earlier this year. You may wish to send correspondence to [PEDW.Casework@gov.wales](mailto:PEDW.Casework@gov.wales) but any correspondence may be returned as it is after the deadline.

You can track the appeal on:

<https://planningcasework.service.gov.wales/advancedsearch> using ref: CAS-03423-V9Z8M3



Yours faithfully

**Paul Griffin BA(hons) MA MRTPI**  
**Principal Planning Officer**

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg.  
Ni fydd unrhyw oedi wrth ymateb i ohebiaeth  
a dderbyniwyd yn Gymraeg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh. There  
will be no delay in responding to correspondence  
received in Welsh.



14/05/2025

Mr Paul Jones,  
Principal Planning Officer,  
Denbighshire County Council,  
Wynnstay Road,  
Ruthin.

Dear Sir,

Re- The severity of blasting carried out at the Breedon's Ltd Denbigh Quarry Site.

Thank you for your response to my letter dated 02/05/2025. This is more than I have received from Breedon's Ltd.

In my letter's dated 04/02/2025 and 04/04/2025 addressed to Breedon's Ltd Denbigh Quarry Site (which I have enclosed for your attention). I particularly refer to the Denbigh Quarry blasting's carried out on the 28/01/2025 and 20/08/2024. On these dates in question the 'noise and ground vibration' resulting from the Denbigh Quarry blasting was 'extremely frightening and concerning.'

The Denbigh Quarry blasting's on the above dates are obviously 'far too high' and really does need to be reviewed and reduced to a 'much lower safety severity degree'.

This is voiced too by my many fellow Denbigh household residents.

Would you be so kind as to please forward my Denbigh Quarry blasting concern correspondence to [PEDW.casework@gov.wales](mailto:PEDW.casework@gov.wales) on my behalf.

The reason as to why I missed the above deadline date: Firstly, I was awaiting a response from Breedon's Ltd to my letters which never materialised.



I look forward to your response again.

Yours faithfully

K.NEEDHAM



## Appendix 3

### Senedd Debate

**04/06/2025 15:16:16 / Y Dirprwy Lywydd / The Deputy Presiding Officer**

**Item 6 is next, the debate on petition P-06-1476, '1000 meter mandatory buffer zone for all new and existing quarries'. I call on the Chair of the committee to move the motion.**

**Carolyn Thomas.**

**04/06/2025 15:16:48 / Carolyn Thomas**

Diolch, Deputy Presiding Officer. On behalf of the Petitions Committee, thank you for the opportunity to introduce this debate. The petition was submitted by Monika Golebiewska, and closed on 10 October 2024 with 11,473 signatures. The petition reads:

'Ensure mandatory buffer zone for all new and existing quarries in Wales. We propose at least 1,000.00 meters buffer zone from all residential areas, schools, hospitals, and care facilities. Currently the law allows for quarries to be located as close as 200 meters away from residential areas and schools. This is affecting people's health and causing damage to property. The bigger buffer zone we can have the better.'

We met the petitioners last November, and their evidence about the impact of the Craig-yr-Hesg quarry on their lives was very powerful. Monika said, 'I'm worried about my health and structural damage to my home.' Young people from Glyncoch had helped gather over 11,000 signatures, showing the strength of local feeling. Although we debated Heledd Fychan's legislative proposal for quarry buffer zones in October, the committee thought it was important for Members to consider the further evidence we have received. I'm grateful to the Cabinet Secretary, the leader of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, quarry owners Heidelberg Materials and the petitioners for their evidence.

We were also contacted by the Mineral Products Association, representing the bulk of operators in Wales. In the interest of balance, I was happy to meet with them before today's debate to hear their concerns about how mandatory buffer zones could affect an industry that employs around 4,000 people and provides vital materials to the Welsh construction industry.

The challenge here is how we safeguard the health and well-being of communities, particularly our most deprived and vulnerable citizens, prevent biodiversity loss, and support the Welsh economy. Quarry locations are dictated by where the materials are to be found, and often, quarries predate the communities that have grown up around them. The MPA also point out the technical evidence and environmental impact assessments undertaken before permissions are granted.

But these are people's lives, and we can't turn back the clock. It is the safety of the children on the way to and from school, with quarry lorries going past. It is the worry about airborne dust in communities, with high rates of serious respiratory conditions. It's the fear about the structural damage to homes, and it's the shock people experience when blasting takes place. It's hard to watch a video of vulnerable children being terrified by blasting operations.



Often on the Petitions Committee, we meet people who feel that their voices have not been heard and that the needs of big businesses are being put above their own. Although this petition calls for wide buffer zones for all quarries, it centres on the lived experience of the community at Craig-yr-Hesg quarry. The expansion of operations there has caused great concern, and as a committee we wanted to shine a spotlight on that.

We're also mindful that there are mothballed quarries across Wales that could reopen in future, so this is a live issue in all our communities. The aggregates levy fund was an important mechanism for affected communities to drive some compensatory benefits from quarrying. That fund no longer exists, as it was considered to become unsustainable. European funding for these kinds of community benefits is also gone, so a question for Welsh Government is how to otherwise guarantee ring-fenced funds to compensate communities. Could we see the reintroduction of the aggregates levy fund in Wales?

We also need to ensure the industry does everything possible to mitigate the effects of its activities. Can more be done about the impact of quarry lorries, for example? They have become bigger, they have become heavier, and they have become noisier.

Community liaison groups are vital in areas where there is quarrying. The council say that setting up a group in Glyncoch has not been without its challenges, but I'm pleased this is now happening and that the council has also set up an online portal at the residents' request. I hope everything possible will be done to help residents. Local representatives, public health experts and the operator need to all work together to address local concerns.

The Cabinet Secretary has explained that she does not support legislative changes that could have adverse consequences and thinks planning policy and guidance is better able to take account of local circumstances, monitor activity and respond to any breaches by operators. I look forward to hearing Members' contributions and also the Cabinet Secretary's response today on what more could be done to show that we are listening to the voices of those most profoundly affected by quarrying activities in Wales. Thank you.

**04/06/2025 15:22:10 / Joel James**

I fully support the existence of buffer zones between quarries and residential areas, schools, hospitals and care facilities. It is important that we recognise and continue to remember the fact that quarrying not only has an environmental impact but also has an impact on those who live and work by them, and it is necessary to ensure public safety.

We have seen time and again in Wales, and most recently for those living in Glyncoch near Craig-yr-Hesg quarry, situations whereby the local community is unnecessarily impacted by quarrying activity, and it is right that the situation is properly looked into. As such, I can certainly see why this petition has been brought forward and has had such strong support. The community feel a strong sense that the quarry is not sympathetic to the impact it is having, especially during blasting, where the noise and sometimes the tremors are felt throughout the village and the wider local area.

I have myself visited several quarries over the years, including Craig-yr-Hesg, and I've met with quarry management staff. I've also met with residents concerned about the impact that quarrying has had on the local area. For both sides of the fence, I can see the concerns and I believe much



more needs to be done in terms of reconciliation and to mitigate the effects of the industry on the surrounding communities. I think this is true for many industries, not just quarrying.

Dirprwy Lywydd, it is important that businesses that have an impact on their environment and on the communities that we live and work in around them are sensitive to the disruption that they may cause. But we also have to be mindful of how quarrying is an essential part of our economy. I therefore believe there needs to be a greater effort by those who manage quarries to be coexistent and not in conflict with the communities that live near them.

Wales has over 2,500 people employed in the mining and quarrying sector, and provides over £170 million to the Welsh economy. It is important that we do not lose these jobs, but it is equally important that communities do not have to live at the mercy of quarrying activities, which can have substantial negative impacts in terms of noise, dust and traffic.

In terms of quarrying and other similar industries, they have a limited choice where they operate, and if communities want employment or want jobs, they also need to engage and form a good working relationship, one that enables both parties to thrive. Minimum buffer zones are a good place to start, and I think there is potential for other provisions to be included that could help communities and quarries exist together in co-operation. I therefore urge the Members here to note this petition. Thank you.

**04/06/2025 15:24:52 / Rhys ab Owen**

I want to consider four questions this afternoon: (1) is the current buffer zone enough; (2) is new legislation needed; (3) are there health implications; and finally, is the case-by-case basis working for the people of Wales.**206**

Firstly, is the current buffer zone enough? To put it in context, 200m is from the Senedd steps to the Norwegian church. Who here would think it'd be appropriate to have such noise and such pollution so near to our national legislature, let alone so near to where children live, are educated and play? A site, and we've seen the videos and photos, that can raise clouds up to the tree line, as seen in photos that have been submitted by campaigners to the Petitions Committee. Heledd Fychan raised, in a letter to our committee, that the small distance of 200m, from the steps to the Norwegian church, isn't in fact what's happening at the moment. The blasting in the Craig-yr-Hesg quarry is only 134m from Cefn Primary School and is only 109m from the rugby club, Glyncoch rugby field. That, ironically, is only the length of the rugby field itself—109m. So, clearly, the current buffer zone is not enough.

Do we need new legislation? Evidence submitted by the company that runs the Craig-yr-Hesg quarry states that they are fully compliant with all regulations and legislation. Assuming that they are correct, and I have no reason to doubt them on that point, surely this is further evidence that current legislation does not go far enough. The ideal legal situation is when companies comply with the law, that the citizens then are happy with that. That clearly is not the case in this matter. Every time this matter is discussed in the Petitions Committee, the public gallery is full, we can see the support here, and we can see it from the photographs and the videos that the campaigners have submitted. The feelings of the local community are clear.**208**

Thirdly, are there health implications? While, technically, it's true that there are no cases of silicosis that have been documented among members of the general public in Britain, that doesn't mean that non-occupational silicosis cannot or will not happen, nor does it mean that no other health issues



might arise from living in close proximity to the quarry. Internationally, we've seen cases of non-occupational silicosis that have already been well documented. Research has also shown a link between living within 500m of a quarry and increased incidence of eye and nasal allergy, chest tightness, chronic coughs, asthma, bronchitis—[*Interruption.*] I haven't got time, sorry—rhinitis and more. Many of us have seen the black handkerchiefs of coal miners. If we suspect that this is an issue now, we need to take action on it.**209**

Finally, is the case-by-case basis working for the people of Wales? The Cabinet Secretary has argued that these cases are more appropriately considered on a case-by-case basis, but I fear that leads to only a deepening of structural inequality. More deprived areas are unlikely to be able to field the defence against a larger company with a well-resourced objection that a less deprived area would. The area of Glyncoch closest to the quarry, described by Welsh data scientists as 'Glyncoch 1', is currently ranked 51 out of 1,909 areas in Wales for overall deprivation, making it one of the most deprived areas in Wales. This puts it in the top 3 per cent of the most deprived areas in Wales. Meanwhile, the company that owns the quarry, Heidelberg Materials, reported a £21,156 million revenue for the year 2024, and £1,980 million profit in the year 2024. For context, the Welsh Government budget is only slightly higher than that.**210**

Not for one minute, and I agree with the comments of Joel James, do I say we shouldn't welcome investment from large companies, but it's the Welsh Government's job to prevent our most vulnerable communities, our most vulnerable societies from being forced to play David fighting Goliath with no support or protection offered. Diolch yn fawr.**211**

#### **Heledd Fychan 15.30.14**

Can I thank Carolyn Thomas and the Petitions Committee for your careful consideration of this important matter? I'm not one to over-dramatise or over-use words, but I think it is scandalous what is happening to the community of Glyncoch. And I'd like to pay tribute to campaigners for the fact that they are fighting this and that they are having to come up with evidence themselves without a lot of support to try and prove what they know is happening within the community.**212**

It is scandalous that their concerns are dismissed because they can't provide all the evidence. And even when they provide the evidence, which they've been doing diligently, it's dismissed or doubted, rather than people taking notice. So, I hope from today's debate that we can take notice and that we also support the community of Glyncoch and actually provide that support that they're requesting to understand what exactly is the impact on communities like Glyncoch. So, I really hope that that can be an outcome.**213**

Their plight was recently highlighted in a Nation.Cymru article by Emily Price—in an article with the headline, 'Valleys community describes life near quarry as "slow Aberfan disaster" '. It's a very harrowing read, and I would urge every Member of the Senedd to read it if you haven't yet. I will circulate via e-mail a copy to all following this debate.**214**

We know that pennant stone is a valuable resource. It's prized for its skid-resistant properties. However, this stone contains approximately 70 per cent silica—a substance that, as has been mentioned, is known to pose several health risks when airborne in fine particulate form. Evidence found by local campaigners confirms that silica dust from the quarry is infiltrating nearby homes. A 2014 study by the University of the West of England found that silica-based dust concentrations were nearly 2.4 times higher in homes close to the quarry boundary compared to those situated several hundred metres away. A recent 2024 dust analysis further revealed that up to 50 per cent of dust samples collected near residential areas consisted of silica dust.**215**

Now, local people have shared their stories of ill health with me, convinced that living with almost constant dust inside their homes, on their cars and in the air, is contributing to their various ailments, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, respiratory difficulties, lung cancers, throat cancers, pneumonia, bronchitis—these are all conditions that have been associated



with long-term low-level exposure to silica dust, or shorter term higher levels of exposure. These are considered dangerous, that's why there are stringent health and safety precautions for employees.**216**

I'm sure we can therefore understand why they are so concerned. I frequently visit residents in Glyncoch, and I did so recently, especially with those who live just over the hedge from where a crusher operates. They showed me the dust that covers their cars and homes. In fact, my own car, after being in Glyncoch for just four hours, was completely covered. It doesn't happen when I visit other areas.

**217**The truth is that regulators and Government cannot be sure whether the concerns people have about the impact of dust on health are based on fear or on reality. Why do we leave it up to campaigners to determine what is safe or not? In terms of the current 200m buffer zone, I'm glad that Rhys ab Owen mentioned the fact that we're not even sticking to that when it comes to this quarry. So, this is about expanding the buffer zone. But I would really like to hear from the Cabinet Secretary why the 200m buffer zone was not adhered to when it came to the expansion of Craig-yr-Hesg quarry—nobody has ever been able to explain or justify that to me.**218**

The evidence does suggest that a buffer is far from adequate to protect human health and well-being, but when it's not even adhered to, questions have to be asked. I would like to call for a review of the minerals technical advice note 1 regulations, as my colleague Hefin David also suggested in the previous debate, and a review of the 'Planning Policy Wales' guidance on this matter. This has to happen—can we have that commitment today?**219**

Secondly, can I ask the Cabinet Secretary to meet with myself and any other Senedd Member concerned about this issue, and with campaigners, and go through, with officials, all the evidence collated, to truly understand? I am fed up of hearing responses that are so standardised and don't take into account the lived experiences. For too long, our natural resources have been exploited and our communities have suffered. They've been ignored. Enough is enough. What is the Government willing to do to support communities like Glyncoch?

**04/06/2025 15:35:27 / Hefin David**

I'll pick up where Heledd Fychan left off. I was pleased to support her legislative proposal last year. The only reservation I had, as you know, was making quarries developments of national significance, which would mean the Welsh Government would take the decision on planning applications. I would rather they stayed local to local authorities. But, at the same time, I think the direction of the legislative proposal was very much in the direction of the petition statement, particularly with the 1,000m rule.

Now, we've got a quarry in Gelligaer, run by a company called Bryn quarry at Gelliargwellt Uchaf Farm. The planning application to extend the quarry was recently approved, despite the objection of residents who live nearby. That quarry has created both blast nuisance and dust nuisance in the communities of Penybryn and Gelligaer. Now, the issue here is not one of lung damage, though, because I set up, in partnership with Caerphilly council, a liaison group, which brought Public Health Wales, Natural Resources Wales and environmental health together. Through that, with residents on board as well, we carried out, through Public Health Wales, dust monitoring, through Petri dishes, in the community in Gelligaer and Penybryn. The dust monitoring was placed at the places where residents wanted them placed. I'm glad to say that the level of silica particulate that was identified was low, and, relative to other areas, was normal. So, we haven't got those same concerns about silica dust problems and lung health in Gelligaer, but it remains, though, a dust nuisance and it



remains a blast nuisance. When blasts happen, residents' windows shake. It can be quite a shock, and we have very little warning as to when these blasts are occurring.

So, as Heledd Fychan said, I've asked for MTAN 1 to be reviewed. It hasn't been updated since it was introduced in March 2004. Surely, there must be an opportunity to look at this. When the Cabinet Secretary responded to Heledd Fychan last year, she said:

'I will explore these issues that have been raised in the Chamber...with officials, and should evidence suggest that that policy or advice is no longer up to date then we'll certainly give consideration to reviewing that guidance.'

She said that 'The minimum distances of the buffer zones that are currently set out in MTAN 1 of 200m for hard rock.... Introducing a mandatory buffer zone of 1,000m could bring about some unintended consequences'.

Well, we need to know how those unintended consequences balance against public nuisance. I think having that discussion—. I'd like to take part—. If the Cabinet Secretary agrees to Heledd Fychan's request, I'd like to take part in that meeting, and have a conversation about balancing those negative unintended consequences against public nuisance.

The Cabinet Secretary also said:

'MTAN 1, though, does make it clear that the potential impact on health must always be considered in relation to proposals for aggregates extraction, and a health impact assessment should be carried out for any proposal for a new quarry'.

But it doesn't just affect health in a physical sense, it can also affect mental health. One of the issues we had when residents saw that quarry being approved for expansion, through Caerphilly council's planning committee, was the fact that it was affecting their mental health. That wasn't a material planning consideration, unfortunately, and therefore it didn't have that effect. Now, if you'd strengthen MTAN 1 to include a bigger buffer zone, so that the quarry could not be expanded towards the community of Gelligaer and Penybryn, then that would have aided their cause and they could have made that case.

So, what I'm really asking the Cabinet Secretary is: will she reconsider her position on MTAN 1, and please could we have that meeting so we can raise those concerns that don't just affect the quarry that Heledd Fychan refers to but also affects the community that I represent in Caerphilly as well?

**Janet Finch-Saunders 15.39.37**

It's an excellent debate, I have to say. So, the petition does call for a mandatory buffer zone for all new and existing quarries in Wales. It has 11,473 signatures—that's fantastic. The proposals of this petition rightly aim to protect the health of residents. It does raise very interesting questions that do need to be considered and addressed. This has the potential to impact many residents across the whole of Wales who currently live near quarry sites. The current law allows for quarries to be located as close as 200m away from residential areas and schools, and there are many quarries across the whole of Wales, with many of them located very near to homes. So, I do—. I noticed in the petition itself it mentioned about—. What do you call it, when it's afterwards that you get the—  
**?232**

**15:40**



That's the one. Yes, retrospective. I'm just a little bit concerned on that aspect, because we have a Heidelberg Materials Aggregates in Penmaenmawr, making some of the finest rock aggregate for roads and things. And I've been around to see them, and they do work very closely with the community. They dampen down on days that they're blasting and things like that. So, there are measures that can be introduced. Should these local quarry companies provide, maybe, a community fund that helps to offset some of the problems that they create? Some people live near active and inactive quarry sites, so, then, again, we'd need to know just what exactly is being asked for here.**234**

I notice also that, too often, people will come to see me on an issue—and I have mentioned that particular site—where they have found dust all over their properties, their windows, the fronts of the houses, their cars. Are they making their residents aware before blasts, as they used to? They used to have the sirens going off. Is that happening as much as it should be? And when I check into these things, I do worry that people buy houses, and that during conveyancing, they're not advised of the impacts. It doesn't come up on local searches even. So, it's a really delicate area that we're talking about.**235**

The quarry in Penmaenmawr—it's history dates back to the 1830s. And, as I say, the aggregates are transported by rail, and I just worry about that. Friends of the Earth have quite rightly highlighted that people living near quarries are more likely to suffer from shortness of breath, coughs, allergies, eye problems like dry eye, soreness or tearing. There are so many issues here, and I really wish you well in taking this forward.**236**

I do think further clarity is needed from the Cabinet Secretary on what ongoing conversations are taking place with the necessary stakeholders about the health and well-being of residents located near quarry sites. We've just done the soundscapes Bill, and the pollution on that. Why, perhaps, were these not classified as witnesses at the time? And then, of course, with new operations, I think there have to be some stark changes to permissions, or else we're just going to keep storing up these problems year after year.**237**

So, will the Cabinet Secretary provide a statement on how this proposed buffer zone will impact those who are already living less than 1,000m away from existing quarries? Diolch.**238**

**04/06/2025 15:43:37 / Delyth Jewell**

I speak in support of this petition. My colleague Heledd Fychan, as has been said, introduced a motion to the Senedd some months ago, which would have achieved something similar. Living near a quarry can seriously affect your health. And as we've heard from what Hefin has said already, residents in Gelligaer and Penybryn, who live near one of these quarries, suffer every time there's a blast from the site, with the dust that's sent over their houses, that cakes their cars in soot, the vibrations in their homes, the noise pollution, unpleasant smells. If a mandatory buffer zone were in place, where there had to be 1,000m between any such site, and people's houses, or schools, it would vastly improve people's quality of life.

The quarry is a constant worry for people living in Gelligaer and Penybryn. They worry about structural damage to their properties. Some of them have shown me the cracks that they say appeared with the blasts. They're worried about how it could affect their insurance, and whether, now that that quarry has been extended, their homes could be devalued. But most of all they are worried about their children. One resident has written to me talking about how the machinery and the noise have woken her sleeping baby, how she has to keep doors and windows closed in the hot weather because of an ugly cliff face of pure dust. She fears for her children's lungs. Her other child,



who is five, often speaks about the noise and the foul smell that comes from the quarry. She's only glad that her five-year-old is in school when they blast, because the windows, the doors, the crockery all shake. She feels sad and angry. The air these residents breathe is affected by this dust. I've long called for enhanced and independent monitoring of the air quality near these quarries. These residents are choking with the dust. We have to see change. And most of all, as we've already heard, we need a system that empowers local residents, not silencing them, I'm afraid, as is happening at the moment. That same resident who wrote to me has said that MTAN 1 quarry guidance is out of date and needs revising, that there is no trust in the quarry from the community—'It feels like everything is against us.' I would add my voice to those points and to what's been said by Heledd Fychan and Hefin David, and I would like, Cabinet Secretary, to be in that meeting to discuss how MTAN 1 can be revised. Change is here patently needed, and it does feel like a farce sometimes, when you look at how these decisions are allowed to be taken in the systems that we have. When that permission was granted for this quarry in particular to be extended, it was passed by a single vote, and, as Hefin has said, it has caused anger and anguish for that community. We need to change how these quarries operate, how closely they can be allowed to people's homes—to where people live their lives and where they breathe every day. I'm urging the Government to listen to this petition and to act on it.

**04/06/2025 15:46:48 / Gareth Davies**

It's a pleasure to take part in this debate this afternoon. I've really enjoyed listening to the contributions, particularly with the health aspects, given my interest in health, and some of those symptoms as a result of living near quarries, and the consequences of some of those geographical realities.

The idea that quarry developments, especially new ones or extensions, should not take place in close proximity to homes and communities without a robust precautionary planning framework—. Residents across Wales are increasingly raising concerns about the impacts of quarries: dust, noise, traffic, long-term environmental degradation and damage to homes caused from the seismic activities. These are not minor inconveniences; they are real threats to well-being, biodiversity and local amenities. The call for a 1,000m buffer zone reflects that anxiety, and I believe we should be listening closely.

If I may, I'd like to speak to one case where such an approach is urgently needed—the proposed extension of Denbigh quarry in my own constituency, which I'm completely opposed to. I regularly meet with the Denbigh Save Our Green Spaces group, who are leading the campaign against Breedon's plans to extend the quarry. It's in the middle of a medieval town such as Denbigh, where an extension would be detrimental to those communities, and particularly those ones in upper Denbigh. That development would devastate grass fields, destroy local woodland and eliminate habitat for protected species such as dormice, bats and peregrine falcons. It runs contrary to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the net zero strategy and the Government's own biodiversity targets to reverse nature loss by 2030. Local residents have mobilised with credible data and the environmental assessments submitted were limited and, frankly, inadequate.

Denbighshire County Council's decision to reject the extension was correct, and I'm pleased that the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning has agreed to meet with me on this issue, and I hope that we can schedule this as soon as possible to discuss the myriad of issues that approving the



Denbigh quarry extension would cause. But Denbigh is not unique, as we've heard in this debate. It's a symptom of a wider issue: a planning system that still too often favours industrial expediency over environmental integrity and community voice. We need national planning policy that is clearer, fairer and firmer, one that balances the economic need for raw materials with our duties to future generations. This petition reflects that public demand for change, so I'd ask the Cabinet Secretary to take on board the sentiments in the petition and look to ensure a solution that ensures the rights of residents are upheld with regard to the new quarries, or quarry extensions for that matter. Thank you very much.

**Y Dirprwy Lywydd / The Deputy Presiding Officer**15:50:00

**I call on the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning, Rebecca Evans.**

**04/06/2025 15:50:15 / Rebecca Evans / Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning**

Thank you very much for the opportunity to respond to the Petitions Committee debate this afternoon concerning the 1,000m buffer zones for all new and existing quarries. And as the Petitions Committee Chair highlighted, we did debate a legislative proposal on this very issue back in October last year, where I outlined a number of reasons why the Welsh Government believes that a mandatory 1,000m buffer zone would not be appropriate for all new and existing quarries, because that is very much a blunt tool. But I'm, of course, very happy to set out our position again today and grateful to colleagues for setting out a real range of important points this afternoon.

This morning, I took the opportunity to visit Cornelly quarry in Bridgend, where I learned about its strategic economic importance to the south Wales region. Cornelly has supported Tata Steel in Port Talbot, it has supplied aggregate for the upgrading of the Heads of the Valleys road, and it has supplied to Cardiff rivers to help alleviate flooding. It will also be playing a really important role in the resurfacing of the M4 between Cardiff and Newport in the coming months. I do think it's fair to say that the contribution of the minerals industry to the economy is very often overlooked, as is the crucial role that they play in delivering our infrastructure, our housing, for example, our schools and our hospitals. So, I do think that we also need to acknowledge that angle in the debate this afternoon.

I am, though, very aware that residents have raised concerns relating to activities at Craig-yr-Hesg quarry in particular. Local planning authorities do have the powers to investigate potential breaches of planning control, and responsibility for enforcing that planning control does lie with local authorities, and that includes the conditions that were attached to the planning permission, which was granted following a successful appeal. The possibility of enforcement action does mean that the case may well again be presented to Welsh Ministers and this time—[Interruption.]—just let me finish this important point, if you don't mind—this time to determine an enforcement appeal. And I know that colleagues will, for that reason, understand that I can't comment on the planning merits for this site, to avoid prejudicing those proceedings, but I do acknowledge how frustrating that is for both colleagues and also for residents as well.



**04/06/2025 15:52:45 / Gareth Davies**

Thank you very much, Cabinet Secretary. I know you say there, and it is true, that local authorities do make these decisions, and quite rightly so, but when they're contested or called in, as it's called, that's subject to ministerial sign-off, which would indeed be yourself. So, where do you assess your role within that in terms of the capabilities and the powers that you have in order to address the concerns raised in this debate that we could directly speak to?

**04/06/2025 15:53:17 / Rebecca Evans**

So, I think that that goes back to that point about enforcement action, and that might well find itself with Welsh Ministers again in future, which is why I'm not able to say more in relation to that, because my role then might be to make a determination in relation to an appeal. And I absolutely understand how frustrating that must be for residents when they hear that, that we're not able to engage directly with the specific points that have been made by colleagues this afternoon, but there are good legal and planning reasons for that.

As I did mention, though, the sustainable supply of minerals and aggregates is essential to support our economic development in Wales, and it is then the role of the planning system to seek to balance society's need for minerals against the protection of amenity. I do appreciate that these issues are very, very controversial at times, and, as I set out in the previous debate, they are also very localised, and that's why they are best, I think, dealt with locally through the appropriate policies in local development plans. And I think, actually, the contributions in the debate this afternoon have only served to reinforce that. They've been very, very local, very locally focused contributions, absolutely quite rightly, because that is what our roles are as Members of the Senedd, to make the case on behalf of our constituents. But I do think that that has emphasised that local point.

**04/06/2025 15:54:45 / Hefin David**

I think that the key issue that comes with that localism is that the rules that have been set for councils mean that councillors have no choice but to vote in favour of planning applications, because officers tell them, 'If you go to appeal, you'll be defending this yourself, and you haven't got a leg to stand on because of the rules.' So, what we're asking for is: help those councillors out to make better local decisions, because MTAN 1 has not been reviewed for 21 years, and, in that 21 years, you've heard all the experiences that Heledd Fychan, that Rhys, that Delyth and Gareth and Janet have mentioned. It must be listened to.

**04/06/2025 15:55:27 / Rebecca Evans**

I will be coming on to the point about MTAN 1 and also the points that you've made in previous debates on this, but I'll just move on to say that we don't agree that a blanket 1,000m buffer zone on new and existing quarries would be appropriate or effective, because, as I said, those circumstances do vary. But 'Planning Policy Wales' and 'Minerals Technical Advice Note (Wales) 1: Aggregates', MTAN 1, are the principal sources of national planning policy, and we do believe that they do provide comprehensive and robust guidance about controlling the impacts of quarrying.

Planning policy is nuanced, and it is capable of being more locally place-based and sensitive, reflecting local circumstances. And also, though, it is kept under regular review, so should evidence



suggest policy or advice is no longer up to date, consideration will be given to reviewing guidance. So, I know colleagues this afternoon have made reference to a number of sets of evidence that they say has changed the situation since MTAN 1 came into force, so, please, let's have that evidence and explore that evidence, because, as I say, we do keep things constantly under review.

One of the key principles within our policy is to provide for the safeguarding and the working of mineral resources to meet society's needs, both now and in the future, encouraging the efficient and appropriate use of those high-quality materials. The system does already require that the consideration of impacts on the environment, biodiversity, and public health are assessed as part of the planning process for new quarries and for the extensions to existing quarries. The primary purpose of those buffer zones is to limit the impact of mineral working and to protect land uses that are most sensitive to the impact of mineral operations by establishing that separation distance between potentially conflicting land uses. And as colleagues have said, the minimum distances of the buffer zones currently set out in MTAN 1 of 200m for hard rock and 100m for sand and gravel were arrived at through careful consideration and consultation with a range of interested and informed stakeholders.

So, introducing that mandatory buffer zone of 1,000m could bring about some unintended consequences, preventing the use of land for other uses, and that might then prohibit or adversely impact on the provision of key infrastructure, and I've mentioned house building as an example.

MTAN 1 is clear that the potential impact on health must always be considered in relation to proposals for aggregates extraction and a health impact assessment should be carried out for any proposal for a new quarry or sand and gravel pit located within 1 km of an existing community.

Our policy recognises that well-established liaison committees do help to provide the better local understanding of the impacts to be expected from aggregates extraction, and many quarries have already established those liaison committees and they do act as a forum for regular discussion and explanation, and those fora can be set up through the initiative of the operator or through the local planning authority, and I can't see any reason why a liaison committee would not be set up around a quarry, especially if it's a quarry where there are particular local concerns, because I think that that could be a really important forum for the exchange of information and exploring ways in which you can work together to address some of the concerns.

As I mentioned earlier, minerals are essential for our continued economic development, and quarries provide the essential raw materials to enable the building of homes and schools and infrastructure, but also the green energy projects that we are developing as well, and of course they play an absolutely vital role in our construction sector. The construction sector represents 6 per cent of the Welsh economy, with a turnover of over £6.1 billion, providing 88,000 jobs—

**04/06/2025 15:59:48 / Rebecca Evans**

Apologies, I will conclude.

So, ultimately, we are seeking to actively reduce the proportion of primary aggregates that are used in relation to secondary recycled or waste materials and there's more work that we're doing in that area that I can share with colleagues. But, really, I do want to thank the petitioners themselves for bringing forward this issue for us to debate this afternoon. I clearly can recognise the strength of



feeling, and the strength of feeling that has been brought forward by the representatives of those constituents as well, but I also hope I've been able to set out how difficult this is, to have that balance between the need for minerals and also the protection of local amenity.

**04/06/2025 16:00:33 / Y Dirprwy Lywydd / The Deputy Presiding Officer**

**And I call on Carolyn Thomas to reply to the debate.**

**04/06/2025 16:02:30 / Heledd Fychan**

**Will you take an intervention?**

**04/06/2025 16:02:32 / Heledd Fychan**

Do you agree with me we have the future generations Act in Wales? Actually, when RCT council had this presented to them, they cited the future generations Act and refused the planning application, but it was Welsh Government that gave the permission to go ahead. Do you think we need to reflect the future generations Act, because that's been since MTAN 2014, and also the World Health Organization in terms of safe levels has changed dramatically? Do you think the Welsh Government should be taking notice of those from what you've heard in terms of evidence?

**04/06/2025 16:03:05 / Carolyn Thomas**

Yes, I think we need to have regard to the well-being of future generations Act, the pollution and soundscapes Bill as well, and other legislation that we've passed since as a Senedd. I think that we need to look at it from a health point of view as well as a business point of view, going forward. It would be appreciated if the Cabinet Secretary would meet with stakeholders, as has been suggested, just so that we can get our view across to you, as well as the side of business. That would be really appreciated.

Cabinet Secretary, I know you spoke about the importance of businesses, but I really do think we need to balance up the health and well-being here, going forward. As was said, it is down to local planning, but when they wanted to object to this planning application, it went to appeal and then charges were put against the local authority by Heidelberg. There's always a threat of that hanging over them, should the appeal go against them.

So, to sum it up, basically, I think that we'd like to have a meeting going forward. We need the MTAN 1 looking at, and we need to have a shift of balance. I'd like to thank the Business Committee for granting time for this important debate, but I'd like to thank all the petitioners and campaigners for fighting to have their voices heard in this Parliament. I hope that you have been heard today and that you feel that you have people putting your point across here. Thank you, Deputy Presiding Officer, for the time. Thank you.

**04/06/2025 16:04:50 / Y Dirprwy Lywydd / The Deputy Presiding Officer**

**The proposal is to note the petition. Does any Member object? No, therefore, the motion is agreed in accordance with Standing Order 12.36.**

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