



Prudham Quarry – April 2021

Background

Since April 2020, Northumberland Wildlife Trust has been engaged with Northumberland County Council and R&K Wood Planning regarding an application to quarry sandstone from Prudham Quarry, near Fourstones village. In that time, we have submitted three responses to the application, dated 22 April 2020, 9 September 2020, and a further letter which was submitted in January of this year. The Trust has also benefitted from correspondence with the Council ecologists and the developer, to further inform our views on this proposal.

Wildlife

The proposed development lies within a non-statutory designated site, Fourstones and Park Shield Quarries Local Wildlife/Geodiversity Site. Initially, NWT was not satisfied with the site surveys for the grassland habitat, and a number of protected species. Following conversations with the County Council ecologist, who has benefitted from a site visit, we are satisfied that the site no longer supports the grassland habitat, or the habitat required for Dingy skipper or protected reptiles.

Additional information regarding breeding birds was made available to NWT for assessment and we are grateful to the developer for providing this information. We are satisfied that adequate steps have been taken to ensure sensitive species will not be disturbed by the proposed works within the quarry.

We understand that concerns had been raised about potential impacts to red squirrels. We are satisfied that this species can be protected through planning conditions; namely, checks being carried out prior to felling by a suitably qualified ecologist/

Geology

In all three of our responses, we highlighted the need for an assessment of the impacts of the proposed development to the geological features for which the site is also designated. Since our last response in January of this year, we have been able to discuss this issue with the agents, R&K Wood Planning. Based on those discussions, we are satisfied that the quarrying will not damage these features, and may in fact improve their visibility.

We are still awaiting a formal response via the planning system from the agent on this matter, but based on the discussions we are likely to remove our objection during the next round of consultation.

Summary

Following discussions with the County Council and the agents for this proposed development, we are satisfied that our concerns have now been adequately addressed, and are likely to lift our objection to the development in the next round of formal planning consultations.

