

## 24/04/2014 Email Query sent to Parks

Since 2005 there have been a large number of developments at the Rocklands caravan park. These developments include

- Large scale removals of trees and vegetation
- Construction and extension of car parking and roads
- Landscaping and terracing of the lower slopes of the park
- Installation of new caravans on the lower slopes of the park
- Construction of a new 2 story building on the edge of the East Hill

From about 2009 because of a continuing programme of tree removals these changes started to be visible from Ecclesbourne Glen. The large car parking area and some roads became clearly visible.

Tree removals continued incrementally and as a consequence by 2014 the buildings in Rocklands became completely visible and many more caravans can be seen. Comparing photos from 2006 with photos today (see attached) shows just how substantial the changes have been. The new building under construction on the edge of the East Hill dominates the views from the East Hill and Glen.

In 2006 Rocklands was a very discrete caravan park which was heavily shielded from view. In 2014 it dominates the Glen and has destroyed much of its natural beauty.

Could you please help me with the following questions:

1. Was your department aware of these incremental developments and their impact on the landscape?
2. What is your departments view on these developments? Do you consider them to be damaging to the country park?
3. What actions did your department take to prevent these developments happening?
4. Did your department at any time consult with the owners of Rocklands about these developments?
5. Did your department at any time consult with HBC planning department about any of these developments?
6. What did your department do when the planning application for the new building was made? Did it formally object to the new building?
7. How did your department respond to public queries about these developments?

In March 2013 (a year before the large landslip) there was a landslip within the grounds of Rocklands.

Could you please help me with the following questions:

8. Was your department aware of the 2013 landslip within Rocklands?
9. Did your department carry out any investigations into its causes?
10. Did your department ensure that this landslip was not a risk to users of the country park?

The public footpath that runs on the southern boundaries of Rocklands was closed in March 2013 due to subsidence. It still remains closed.

Could you please help me with the following questions:

11. Did your department carry out any investigations into its causes?
12. Did your department investigate the nearby landscaping works in Rocklands as a potential cause of this subsidence?

**21/05/2014 Email to Murray Davidson**

Dear Murray

Over the last few months I have been looking into the history of developments at Rocklands Caravan Park.

It is now recognised by Planning that since about 2005 Rocklands have extended car parking areas, built new roads, installed caravans without seeking planning permission and in breach of previous planning conditions.

The area of concreted car parks, roads and hard standing for caravans has considerably increased run off from the grounds of Rocklands. In addition it is possible that the grey water waste from the caravans was discharged into the ground. I have no idea how sewage is disposed of. Given that no planning permission was sought it is unlikely that Rocklands carried out any drainage surveys and it is unlikely that the hard surfaces are properly drained. The topology of the site and configuration of roads and car park means that a lot of this drainage run off has been concentrated and discharged at a single point into the country park.

My concern is that over the years Rocklands has allowed polluted run off into the Hastings Cliffs SSI which begins immediately below the southern borders of the caravan park. This run off would include oil and other wastes from parked vehicles and the discharge from caravans would include other pollutants. This issue reminds me of the history of slurry discharges from Fairlight Place Farm before HBC intervened and bought the farm.

My understanding is that SSI sites are highly protected and the drain off from such pollutants would not be permitted.

Could you please let me know:

- Whether the SSI below Rocklands is protected by law from such pollutants draining into it?
- What measure have been taken since 2005 to assess the impact of these development on the SSI?
- What measures have been taken to measure the degree of pollution run off from Rocklands?
- What measures will be taken to prevent such drainage run offs from Rocklands in the future?
- How sewage waste was disposed of .Was it draining into the SSI?
- If it is found that Rocklands waste was draining into the SSI would this be grounds for prosecuting Rocklands?

As a consequence of the landslip a lot of building and other waste has been displaced from Rocklands caravan park into the SSI.

This waste includes building materials, car batteries and metal containers. It has also been reported that there might be asbestos waste within the landslip.

Could you please let me know

- Has there been any investigation into the nature of the waste materials deposited by the landslip?
- Is there a clean up programme planned to ensure that hazardous materials are removed?
- Will Rocklands be meeting the costs of these clean up operations?
- If asbestos waste is found will this be grounds for prosecuting Rocklands?

**09/06/2014** Reply finally received from Victoria Gilbert Head of amenities and leisure in response to both queries.

Dear Mr. Hurrell,

**Questions to HBC Parks Department re. Ecclesbourne Glen landslips**

Your emails and recent follow-ups to the Parks department have been forwarded to me. I understood that all your queries were to be dealt with at your meeting with Councillors and representatives of the Planning Department. I'm sorry for the delay and will now add Parks-specific comments.

You ask whether we were aware of incremental developments at Rocklands, what we think of the developments, what actions we have taken to prevent developments, what consultations we have held, whether we objected to developments and how we responded to public queries.

The Parks Department **was not aware of incremental developments** at Rocklands and therefore **did not take any action nor consult anyone on these developments**. We did not receive any public queries on these developments until after the major 2014 landslip. Our view of the developments would be in line with the assessment in the geotechnical survey, that is, if surface water runoff from the developments contributed to the groundwater level variations and thus land instability, they would have contributed to the damage in the country park. The major factor in the landslip, however, was the extreme weather conditions.

The Parks Department does not have enforcement power over developments on private land. With regard to a landslip in March 2013, you ask similar questions about what we knew, when we knew it and what we did about it.

**The Parks Department was aware of the fissures in the footpath on HBC land.** We assessed the situation with the County Rights of Way team resulting in the closure of the public footpath. **We did not investigate developments in Rocklands as we were not aware of them.**

Then you ask about pollution of the SSSI, whether it is protected, whether pollution has been measured, how we will prevent drainage runoff, was sewage draining into the SSSI. You also mention reports of asbestos and whether there will be a cleanup operation, who will pay for it and whether prosecutions will result.

As of this writing, we have no evidence of pollution by either sewage or asbestos. The sewage arrangements at Rocklands have been investigated by the Planning Department; sewage does not drain into the SSSI. There have been at least two visits by Environmental Health regarding asbestos fragments and burning of asbestos, with results reported to you. At this stage, there are no plans for a cleanup operation in the country park. There are no plans for any intervention in the landslip area at this time as the land is still moving and therefore dangerous.