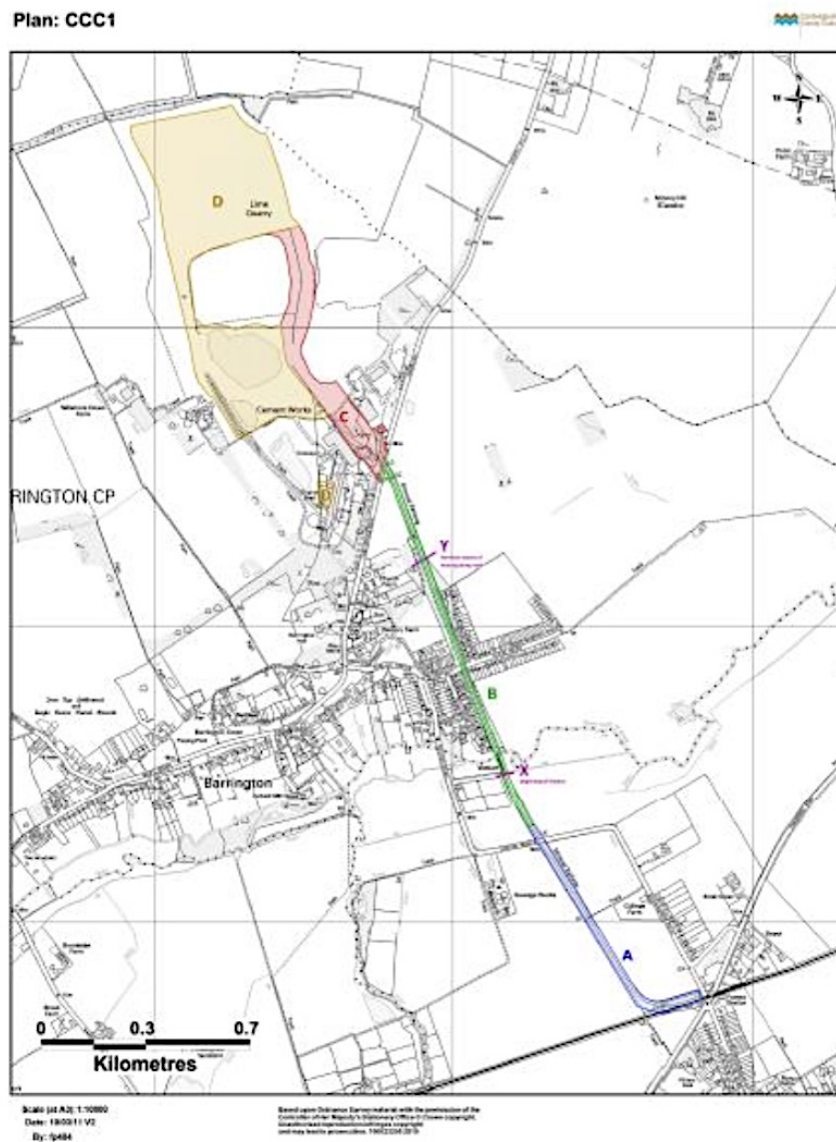


Planning application S/0204/16/CW:

Representation from Ross and Rhia Pow, College Farm, Barrington Road, Foxton, CB22 6SJ

1. The noise from the trains has a disproportionately large impact on our lives

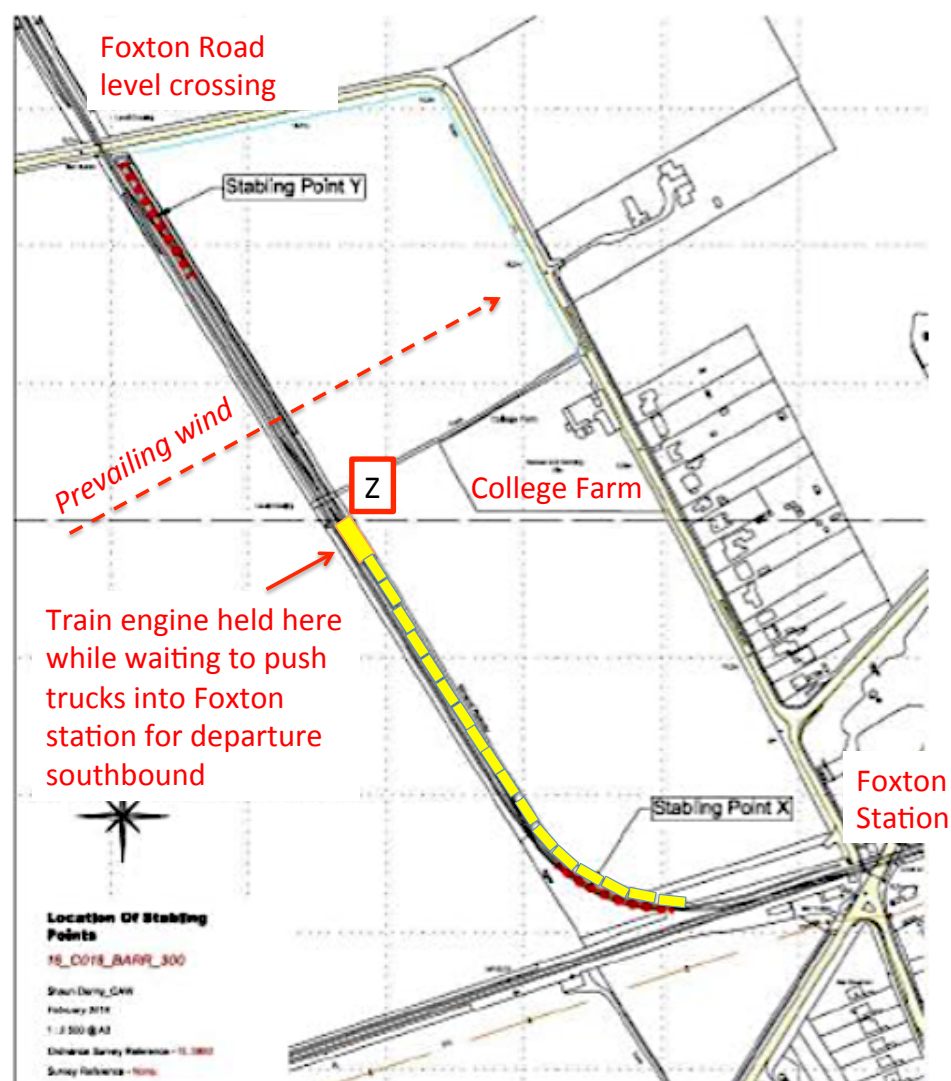
We live at College Farm on Barrington Road (section A on the Barrington Light Railway map). Foxton sidings are directly behind our house.



As we demonstrated at the Planning Committee meeting, the particular nature and intensity of the noise from the trains has had a very detrimental effect on the enjoyment of our home and garden. We have had to endure a mix of long periods of incessant engine throbbing, regular revving and the squeal from the wheels and brakes.

As the Sidings are used to run the engine round from the front of the trucks to the rear (and vice versa) and also to await departure before entering Foxton mainline station to return south, this can total up to six hours of noise per day.

The impact is especially intense when the engine is held stationary right behind our property (point Z on the map below), which is where they sit as they await departure southbound on their return journey with the empty trucks.



2. The initial 2011 planning approval was marginal and placed conditions to protect residents from adverse noise impacts which it has not been possible to enforce

It was recognised that the proposal represented an enormous increase in the use of the Barrington Light Railway, both in terms of the number of hours trains would be running but also in upgrading the line to be able to operate mainline engines instead of small shunters. Prior to 2011, the Sidings were used for a maximum of 30 minutes per week (and are actually shown as 'disused' on the Council map!).

Taking this into account, the recommendation of the officer for the initial infill application in 2011 was marginal: "The balance just lies in favour of the proposal" and "the impacts of intensifying the use of the railway can be kept to an acceptable level by planning obligations."

The last three years, however, have demonstrated that such planning conditions and obligations to control noise from the trains do not work and cannot reasonably be expected to be effective or enforceable within Foxton Sidings. Examples include:

- trains running outside of the permitted hours
- excessive squealing from the wheels and brakes
- engines idling for hours
- exceeding the decibel limits the applicant itself proposed.

At the heart of this is the difficulty that any owner of the quarry will face in controlling the train sub-contractors it must use to deliver the infill. To quote Cemex: "One of the problems is that we do not have control of the contractor once the train has left site." And from another of their emails: "Our discussions with the train operator asking for a change in behaviour appear to have yielded little in practice."

The eventual issuing of a Planning Contravention Notice in May 2017 did not substantially change any of these problems and the situation only improved in recent months when Cemex was unable to continue running the trains because of problems with sourcing sufficient contracts for suitable infill materials.

The Council's own Environmental Health officer and noise consultant both confirm that operational controls of contractors cannot be relied upon to mitigate noise and both warn of the adverse impact on existing residents, especially given the 15-year length of the application.

The impact on us will be heightened because trains are being allowed to arrive in Foxton from 0530 in the morning compared with 0700 at Barrington. While some physical mitigation measures are suggested, none of these will tackle the problem of the train engines when they are positioned directly behind our house. Our daughter and grandson, both of whom live with us, will therefore be subjected to the noise for the entirety of his growing up.

3. If approval is given to proceed with full restoration of the quarry over the proposed duration (15 years and potentially more), we request a strengthening of the conditions to mitigate the negative noise impacts

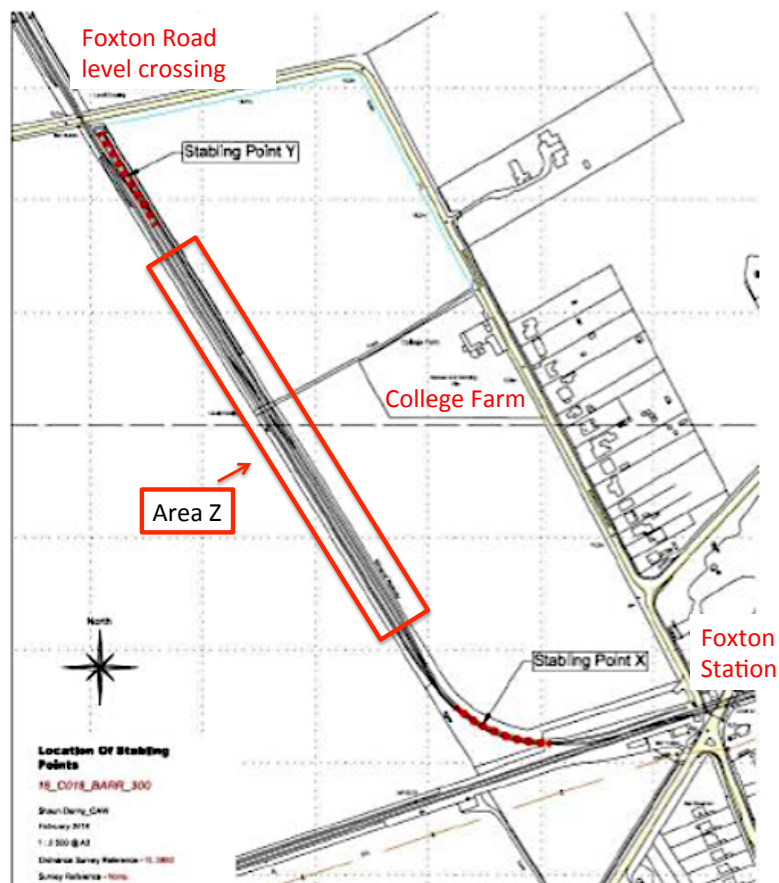
The only reliable ways to minimise the harms to amenity are to limit the number of trains allowed per working day and to constrain the hours of operation. We therefore request that if approval is given to proceed with the full restoration of the quarry over the proposed duration (15 years or more), that:

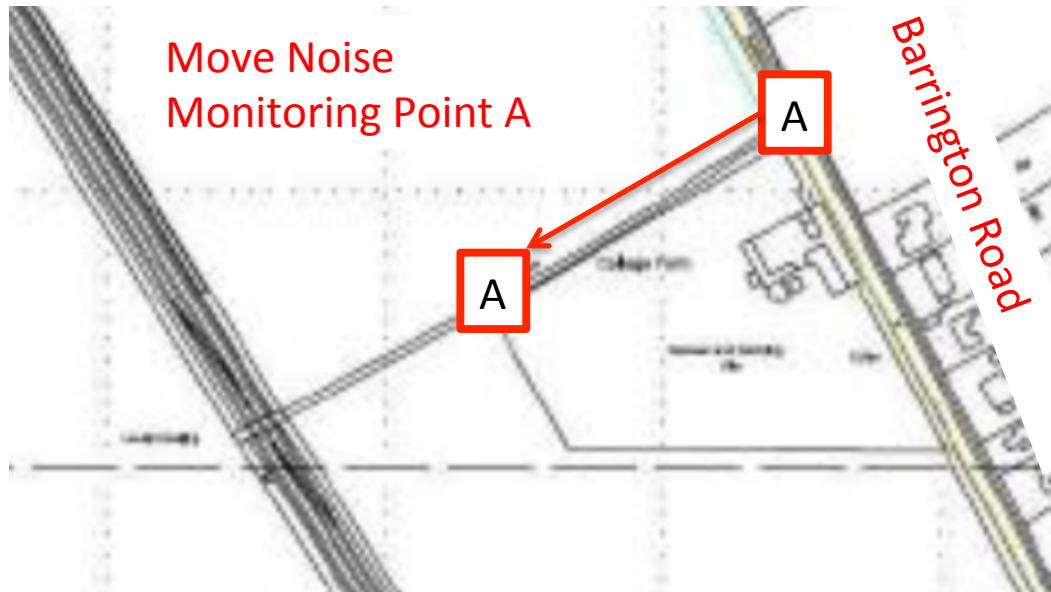
1. A maximum of two trains / 4 train movements per day will be permitted.
2. No trains will be allowed to operate in Foxton Sidings before 0700 and after 2000, affording Foxton residents that same protections as provided to those in Barrington (this request has previously been supported by a petition of Barrington Road residents delivered to the Council).

In addition, to mitigate and monitor the noise impacts in Foxton Sidings, the following additional conditions are also requested:

3. An obligation to erect engine sheds (our preference) and/or acoustic grade fencing at the stabling points X and Y on the map below.
4. A requirement for all engines and rolling stock to be of a maximum age and minimum quality (of a similar nature to the types of conditions placed on the Cambridge Guided Bus contract). This should include all engines to have Auto Engine Stop-Start capability.

5. No temporary period to be allowed to run older or poorer quality engines and rolling stock (eg for 12 months after the planning approval as is the current proposal).
6. A regular requirement (eg every five years) to review the age and quality of engines and rolling stock being used.
7. A 15-minute limit on engine idling time (ie maintain the same as specified in the 2011 approval and not increase this to 30 minutes as proposed).
8. No engine to be held stationery directly behind College Farm (suggested as Area Z on the map below).
9. Clear signage to direct drivers on idling times, use of stabling points and avoidance of being stationery in Area Z.
10. Quarterly monitoring of noise levels for both arriving and departing trains. We also request that the 'point A' for noise monitoring on Barrington Road is moved as shown on the map below in order to better measure the noise at the boundary edge of the property, so avoiding reliance on estimates and calculations to assess whether noise levels exceed the daytime 55dB LAeq,1h limit (the quarry operator and its contractors use this track in order to access the railway lines).





4. A alternative quarry restoration option is available that better balances all the interests concerned

A number of Councillors at the Planning Committee asked questions about the relative merit of doing a full restoration of the quarry rather than completing the partial restoration that was approved in 2011.

We believe that reverting to a proposal that completes the partial restoration is, in fact, the best overall option that balances the needs of all stakeholders. So, rather than bringing in material for 15 or more years for a complete restoration, the proposal could be redesigned to bring in just enough external material to complete the partial restoration.

The arguments in favour of this are:

1. The partial infill approved in 2011 should deal with all the safety and hazard issues (eg water accumulation) of the unfilled quarry.
2. The shorter duration for infilling would reduce the burden on existing local residents.
3. The potential amenity harms to residents in the new housing would be minimised.
4. Some additional income could still be generated from the quarry infill.

5. The ecological and amenity assessments of a full restoration are not that significant for the local community (the land mostly being restored to a mix of farmland and grass with limited levels of bio-diversity).
6. This approach secures access to a supply of clunch for local restoration works on significant historic buildings.
7. There should be less potential impact on construction of the cycle path.