Minutes of Airfield Liaison Committee Meeting, Thursday 15 October 2026

Attendees:

Gloucestershire County Council Planning
Jason Betty (JB)

Down Ampney Parish Council
Antony Matthews (AM)

Marston Meysey Parish Council
Derek Richards (DR)

Latton Parish Council
Nichola Crabtree (NC)

RAF Fairford
James Nobile – Flight Safety (JN)

Hills Quarry Products
Olly Thompson (OT)

The Hills Group
Chris Waddell – Communications Manager (CW)

Local resident:
Kerry Torrens (KT)

Apologies:
Ben Owen - Down Ampney PC

1.0 Introductions

2.0 Previous minutes - approved

3.0 Project Overview & Site Activity:

OT gave a general overview of operations to date:

- Timeline is going according to plan as communicated in June
- All minerals have been extracted from the Silt Management Area and are stockpiled on-site
- Silt lagoon being fenced off for safety reasons and should be complete by 16 October
- Phase 1 was in process of soil removal at the time of the last meeting but is now almost finished with a small amount of overburden remaining
- Phase 1 Archaeology has been signed off by the County Archaeologist

OT gave a rundown on the position and shape of bunds:

- Soils removed from phase 1 have been used for temporary bunds around the site to help with noise attenuation and visual impact.
- Excess soils have been stored around the site
- SSEN (Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks) have some overhead cables across the site which will be diverted through trenchwork around the perimeter of Phase 1 during October and November. Because of this, the bunds are not in their permanent location, to allow for the machinery to pull the cables through.
- Bunds will be moved to final positions once cables are buried. They will be the proper shape, height and look tidier at that point

- **OT** indicated position of cabling from the north to the south of the site and indicated that any notices of disruption should come from SSEN.
- **KT** asked about conveyors
- **OT** indicated that the current timeline for the conveyors to be installed is Spring 2027 and that dump trucks have been used in the meantime, alongside the soil stripping
- **OT** explained the position of the new access road on the old Oak Road, and that asphalt and white lining were happening at this time.
- **DR** asked about the ongoing road closure near the new entrance
- **OT** explained this was nothing to do with Hills and was a Wiltshire Council Highways closure.
- **DR** said Wiltshire had given no notifications of this work
- **JB** explained that Wiltshire had been trying to get Hills to pay for works and that it transpired Wiltshire already had a budget to repair local roads and the bridge at Latton along with making improvements for future traffic needs.
- **DR** said everyone in Marston Meysey was blaming Hills for the roadworks.
- **OT** requested that it was communicated that this wasn't the case.
- **CW** pointed out that the confusion may have come because the road was closed near Hills' entrance.
- **OT** said it was expected the road would reopen on the 6th of November.

3.0 Upcoming Works & Timeline

- **OT** explained that the Oak Road entrance at the south of the site would become Hills permanent entrance rather than the old farm entrance at the north of the site.
- **OT** explained that the temporary weighbridge was being installed and that new offices and a staff car park would be in place in 2027 just south of the bridleway.
- SSEN would be connecting the site to the electricity grid in Q3 and Q4 2027 subject to off-site upgrades taking place.
- **KT** asked if the site would be lit at night
- **OT** said only minimal out of hours lighting would be in place for example to help with CCTV around fuel storage. These are likely to utilise motion sensors.
- Permanent processing plant deliveries should start in Q2 and Q3 2027. With completion early 2028.
- **NC** asked about the duration of phase 1 and the restoration plan
- **OT** said phase 1 would take around 18 months to extract, and the site's restoration would be to part agriculture, part wetland and heathland and that more details were on the planning portal.
- **KT** asked about restoration being dependent on suitable infill materials.
- **OT** said this was correct but that was already part of Hills business model with inert tips already in the area.
- **OT** explained that Hills worked within an LEMP (Local Ecological Management Plan) and that would be optimised phase by phase with Gloucestershire County Council.

4.0 Archaeology Update

- Half of Area A had been explored by archaeologists
- Roman remains were found within the silt management area
- 13 Roman bodies were found as part of this
- 20,000 artefacts including pottery have also been found in this area
- In area B a Bronze age settlement has been found, with over 200 post holes

- **DR** asked about prehistoric/palaeontological or similar finds
- **OT** explained that fossils were usually found deeper in the Kellaways Layer below the sand and gravel, as had happened at Cerney Wick where there had been Mammoth finds.

5.0 Environmental Controls

- Noise controls include the building of bunds and white noise reversing signals which are less audible off-site. Also, strategic location of processing plant area surrounded by the woodlands
- Most noise would be generated to the centre of the site where operations were concentrated. This area is screened by bunds and woodland
- **KT** asked about weekend operations
- **JB** said Hills would work to their standard published hours as per planning and as documented on the last minutes
- **OT** confirmed lorry movements would be within allowable hours
- **KT** said that they had experienced no issues to date and that her property was being rented to tenants and asked could Hills confirm arrangements in writing to her.
- **CW** said that Hills were contactable through the usual channels if there were any issues
- Despite hot, dry weather Hills has kept on top of dust issues by using water bowsers to spray down the site
- Around 6,000 trees had been planted to date, with a view to control noise and visual impact, in anticipation of later phases.

6.0 Planning

- Approval gained for permanent use of the new access road.
- All permits in place including for water monitoring, extraction and discharge
- Ongoing water level and quality monitoring using boreholes.
- No issues found to date
- Application being submitted for a potential new standalone solar scheme at the site to support up to 80% - 90% of the site's electricity needs
- Battery storage being considered
- New solar scheme would be to the south/south-west of the site
- **JN** said RAF Fairford would have an interest in the positioning of the solar panels because of potential issues with glint and glare affecting incoming flights
- **JB** said the only contentious aspect of solar as far as the council was concerned was the use of battery storage, considered by some parties to be environmentally unsound because of the minerals within.
- **NC** asked about long-term solar farm plans
- **JB** confirmed that Hills application would likely be tied to the operational life of the site
- **KT** asked about hedging around solar panels.
- **OT** confirmed this can be considered as part of the application

7.0 AOB, Questions & Open Discussion

- Hills were contributing to infrastructure upgrades at the Down Ampney Village Shop (confirmed since the meeting as meeting an application for £10,000).
- Hills materials had been donated to construct the village shop car park.
- Annual War Memorial Sweeping as well as maintenance and fencing supplied by Hills.
- **AM** said that Down Ampney PC had requested to take over the maintenance of the war memorial but there appeared to be issues from the landowner with that.
- **AM** asked that the PC could be furnished with updates on the archaeology.

- **CW** confirmed this would be looked at but that Hills was reluctant to talk too openly about archaeology due to issues with unauthorised fossil hunters trespassing on the site.
- **OT** agreed there had been issues at previous digs and that the ongoing safety issues of an active quarry were paramount.
- **OT** confirmed bird management was ongoing and that a review of this could happen for the benefit of RAF Fairford after 12 months.