

**Motion submitted by Councill Chris Boden regarding
Saxon Pit**

1. The former Saxon Pit brickworks in Whittlesey is a site licensed by the Environment Agency for the acceptance and disposal of waste materials.
2. Since the original planning permission was granted by Cambridgeshire County Council in January 2003, only inert materials are meant to have been disposed of there.
3. In late 2007, many local residents in Whittlesey reported an unusual and strong bad smell emanating from Saxon Pit
4. Despite efforts from both local residents and local Councillors, the Environment Agency has been extremely slow in revealing precisely what has been deposited and Saxon Pit.
5. Our Member of Parliament, Steve Barclay MP, has written several times over the last three years to the Environment Agency concerning what is happening at, and what is planned for, Saxon Pit. Local residents and Councillors are very grateful to our MP for the pressure that he has brought to bear upon the Environment Agency.
6. In November 2020, as a direct result of the pressure exerted by Steve Barclay MP, the Environment Agency revealed the following:
 - a. 122,858 tonnes of non-conforming waste was accepted and disposed of by the current operator and this non-conforming waste was unlawfully buried within the void in the pit between October 2017 and February 2018.
 - b. Further waste, in addition to that 122,858 Tonnes, had been unlawfully accepted and buried at the site by one or more previous operators pre-October 2017.
 - c. Formal samples have been taken across the void to varying depths, following investigatory work by the Environment Agency. Borehole drilling, conducted in September 2019, identified significant visual contamination of non-conforming waste down to depths of between 6 and 15 metres. According to the Environment Agency, of the 50 samples submitted for analysis, 43 contained sufficient chemical contaminants to render them hazardous.
 - d. Without any consultation with local residents, the local Town Council or Fenland District Council, the Environment Agency took a decision in June 2020, unilaterally so far as we are aware, to permit all non-conforming waste to remain buried within the excavation void.
7. No details have been provided to local residents or the local Councils of any investigations or analyses to support the Environment Agency's decision not to insist upon the removal of the unlawfully buried waste, nor has any information been provided to give confidence to local residents that the "hazardous chemical contaminants" do not now and may not in the future pose a hazard to the environment in general and to human health in particular. It is only in the last two weeks that a specialist environmental journalist has revealed that Copper, Zinc and Petroleum Hydrocarbons exceed hazardous levels at the site because of the unlawful dumping of "Automotive Shredder Residue". No quantities of these, or any other, hazardous chemicals on site have yet been revealed.
8. Following recent heavy rain, the onsite storage lagoon (which is meant to contain the majority of the runoff originating within the Saxon Pit area) quickly reached its storage capacity. The landowner temporarily pumped water from the lagoon up a nearby embankment and into the King's Dyke watercourse. The Environment Agency have said that they have "formerly sampled outlets into the lagoon" but the detailed results of any analysis of those samples have not been released.
9. A proposal has now been made to build a recycling plant at Saxon Pit which would accept and process in excess of 50 tonnes per day of Incinerator Bottom Ash and inert waste.

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL THEREFORE RESOLVES:

10. That the Environment Agency be requested to provide Fenland District Council, on an open basis, with the full analytic results from the 50 boreholes drilled on the site, with full details of the types and quantities of hazardous chemical contaminants that were found by the Environment Agency.
11. That the Environment Agency be requested to provide Fenland District Council, on an open basis, with full technical specifications of any proposed capping of that waste, together with the calculations supporting their conclusions as to the likely effectiveness of such capping over the short, medium and long terms.
12. That the Environment Agency be requested to provide Fenland District Council, on an open basis, with the full analytic results of the samples they have recently tested from the lagoon, together with their full assessment of the quantity of water and likely level of contaminants which have been released into the local watercourses in the last two months.
13. That Fenland District Council, unless entirely satisfied that the answers to the preceding three points show no danger to the environment or to public health from the hazardous chemical contaminants in Saxon Pit, should (a) make the strongest possible representations to Cambridgeshire County Council's Planning Committee on environmental grounds against any planning permission which is sought to construct a recycling plant at Saxon Pit (b) request Cambridgeshire County Council to take action in respect of the deposition of non-inert waste at the pit, contrary to the County council's planning permission conditions and (c) object to non-inert waste, in the form of Incinerator Bottom Ash, being deposited in future at Saxon Pit.
14. That the Environment Agency be requested to provide Fenland District Council, on an open basis, with full details of how the Environment Agency has handled the complaints made, and unlawful dumping that has occurred, at Saxon Pit since October 2017, with a full explanation as to why, in accordance with the Environment Agency's own Enforcement and Sanctions Policy, effective action in respect of the hazardous waste and in respect of those responsible for its unlawful dumping has not taken place.
15. That this motion, once passed, be forwarded to Steve Barclay MP, Cambridgeshire County Council's Planning Department and the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.
16. That any failure by the Environment Agency to explain its actions and/or inactions in respect of Saxon Pit be referred by Fenland District Council to Steve Barclay MP, to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy with respect to his Department's overview of the Regulator's Code.