

Saxon Pit: New Regulatory Evidence Raises Serious Questions Over Drainage, Safety and Planning Decisions.

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Saxongate Residents Group is today releasing new information from the Middle Level Commissioners (MLC) and the Environment Agency (EA) which shows that the long-running lagoon discharge at Saxon Pit has **no valid consent**, may be required to stop, and has been operating for years **without a determined EA discharge permit**. This discharge forms the core drainage pathway for the site and underpins the Science Park, the Johnsons Aggregates Section 73 proposal, and the new metal-recycling operations granted permission earlier this year.

Recent MLC correspondence (attached) confirms that downstream capacity cannot be assumed, that consent has not been granted for foul or surface-water drainage, and that a notice requiring the discharge to stop may be issued. MLC has raised these concerns directly with the Secretary of State. The EA has also confirmed that historic water-quality assessments relied on only four samples taken from the wrong location, and that the lagoon discharge has continued without a permit while the EA's permitting team is still determining the application.

The EA's September compliance report halted metal-recycling activity at the lagoon edge after finding breaches of planning conditions, inadequate drainage and contaminated, IBA-affected material stored in the open. This followed a Planning Contravention Notice issued by Cambridgeshire County Council earlier this year which we already reported.

The new statutory-consultee evidence also raises fundamental questions about the long-term viability of the site. Without the lagoon discharge, Saxon Pit would fill with water, yet new activities involving IBA/IBAA processing and contaminated materials continue to be permitted on the assumption that drainage is secure. The updated information from MLC and the EA shows that this assumption is no longer reliable. **Previous planning reports treated the lagoon discharge as outside the scope of certain applications, but the latest regulatory evidence makes clear that all operations at the site depend on a drainage pathway whose legality and capacity remain unresolved.**

Saxongate Residents Group has written to the Secretary of State asking for the Article 31 holding direction on the Science Park to be maintained, and for national consideration of the Johnsons Section 73 proposal given the newly changed environmental baseline. We have also asked that all drainage and hydrological assumptions used by councils and regulators reflect the current evidence and that full water-treatment options be assessed.

A spokesperson for Saxongate Residents Group said:

“This new information shows the Saxon Pit drainage system is not secure, not consented and not properly assessed. Residents have raised these concerns for years. The statutory bodies are now confirming the issues we have consistently highlighted. We are asking for transparency, proper safeguards and a planning system that reflects the facts on the ground.”

