

SAXON PIT IBA EXPANSION – KEY FACTS BEFORE THE PLANNING VOTE, WEDNESDAY 4 MARCH, 10AM:

On Wednesday 4 March at 10am, Cambridgeshire County Council's Planning Committee will decide whether to approve a substantial expansion of incinerator bottom ash (IBA) operations at Saxon Pit. Officers are recommending approval.

We believe that decision would be wrong, and we believe the evidence now on record makes it very hard to justify.

WHAT THE APPLICATION ACTUALLY PROPOSES

This is not a minor amendment. The application seeks to nearly double the volume of IBA processed at Saxon Pit, introduce outdoor crushing and screening of IBA, increase HGV movements significantly, and raise stockpile heights. It does all of this on the same footprint, with no proposed changes to the concrete pad or the greywater system that are central to how the site is meant to contain chemically active, toxic material.

There is also a specific regulatory discrepancy. The Environment Agency permit limits IBA stockpiles to 4.6 metres with 1 metre freeboard for turning and operational management. Planning drawings associated with this application show stockpile heights up to 6.7 metres. Those two regulatory positions are not aligned. The EA is the site regulator.

THE SITE IS CURRENTLY IN BREACH, INCORRECT IBA STORAGE

CCC Enforcement has confirmed in writing that incinerator bottom ash is being stored outside the approved Waste Reception Area. This is a breach of Condition 25 of the existing planning permission. The concrete pad that forms the core of the site's containment system has been damaged, again. This is the second time within twelve months. The reasons for the damage and the lengthy repair periods are unknown, mechanical, chemical or both, IBA is a chemically active material and attacks setting concrete. A large amount of IBA will probably still be stored outside the approved area when the Committee sits on Wednesday.

Standing water has been observed on the operational surface. Investigations are ongoing. No dust or water is supposed to leave the site but recent site photos make it hard to see how that can be guaranteed, and the refusal by the authorities to carry out relevant testing makes it impossible to prove.

There is a further concern about the greywater system. Water that contacts IBA outside the approved containment area is recycled on site for dust suppression without chemical testing. As throughput increases and material is stored and processed in greater volumes, the question of what accumulates in that recycled water becomes more significant, not less.

The application asks Members to approve a near-doubling of IBA throughput on infrastructure that is currently damaged and under active enforcement investigation. There are no proposed changes to the reception pad or wedge pit system in this application.

THE OPERATOR'S OWN DOCUMENTS CONFIRM A TRAFFIC BREACH

The applicant's own Transport Assessment, submitted as part of this application, states that the site has consent for 92 vehicle movements per day and that current operations average 140 movements per day. On the operator's own figures, this exceeds the existing planning condition by more than 50%. The variation seeks consent for up to 332 vehicle movements per day. The council has taken no enforcement action.

THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY CHANGED CORE DATA TWO WORKING DAYS BEFORE THE MEETING

On 20 February, the Environment Agency provided data under an Environmental Information Regulations request, stating expressly that it was the dataset supplied to UKHSA for the public health assessment. That response gave no indication that further sampling, modelling or analytical work existed beyond the disclosed material. The data showed elevated heavy metals in King's Dyke sediments. Residents and councillors relied on it. On Friday 27 February, two working days before the planning meeting, the Agency wrote to say those results were preliminary and anomalous, and that subsequent modelling shows no environmental harm. That modelling has not been published. The EA have also announced they have issued a discharge permit from Saxon Pit into Kings Dyke. That permit has not been made public. Members are being asked to approve a major operational increase while core information is not in the public domain.

We have asked the Agency formally whether their EIR response is complete, what further information is held, and on what timeline it will be released. We have not yet had an answer.

THE AGENCY HAS ALSO CONFIRMED IT HAS NOT TESTED FOR PFAS AT SAXON PIT

PFAS are persistent, bioaccumulative substances regulated at extremely low environmental thresholds because of their long-term health effects. Peer-reviewed research demonstrates that PFAS are present in municipal incinerator bottom ash. The Agency has confirmed it has not tested IBA for PFAS at Saxon Pit, but has nevertheless stated it does not consider IBA to present a PFAS risk. That conclusion, reached without site-specific testing, has not been adequately justified. We have formally challenged it and flagged the possibility of referral to the Office for Environmental Protection if the position is maintained. IBA was excluded as a pathway in the recent UKHSA Public Health Report. We are challenging that decision, but the withdrawal of key testing data on 27 February 2026 hampered that work at a critical moment ahead of the 4 March planning decision.

STATUTORY OBJECTIONS REMAIN UNRESOLVED

The Director of Public Health recommended refusal in January, recognising cumulative health impacts and loss of trust among residents. She called for enhanced monitoring, a cumulative health impact assessment, and a new oversight structure before any expansion. None of that has been implemented.

Peterborough City Council's Highway Authority maintains a formal objection. The A605 junction operates above theoretical capacity with the development in place, and the objection has been sustained across three separate submissions. Saxongate considers that no agency has assessed the cumulative impact of additional traffic from the recently approved Science Park development at Victory Pit.

The Middle Level Commissioners have confirmed that the site does not currently have consent to discharge into King's Dyke. This is essential to prevent flooding. That consent is not automatic and must be applied for separately. The site relies on pumping into King's Dyke to avoid flooding. Without that consent, lawful operation as proposed is in question. They have asked for the decision to be delayed.

THE INDEPENDENT SCIENTIFIC REVIEW

Residents have commissioned an independent peer review of the multi-agency public health assessment. That review identifies methodological gaps in the UKHSA study, including the omission of IBA as a specific contamination pathway, the absence of chemical analysis of dust, and conclusions that are narrowly framed to limited locations and timepoints. The review also identifies inconsistencies in the agricultural pathway assessment. Abstraction licences exist for King's Dyke water for spray irrigation, yet the study screened out that pathway. The review was

delayed by the late disclosure of EA data in February, data which they withdrew on 27/02/26 while failing to provide any alternative test results. We continue to press for that hard scientific evidence. So far it has not been released.

WHY THIS MUST NOT BE RUSHED

The Public Health drop-in on 4 February was attended by more than one hundred residents and was presented as the start of a new process to rebuild trust. Fourteen days later, on 18 February, residents were notified that this application would be determined on 4 March with an officer recommendation for approval. The liaison group has not been formed. No quarterly meeting has taken place. None of the trust-building measures have commenced.

This application has been under consideration for eighteen months. A short deferral would cost nothing and would allow Members to decide on a complete and stable evidential basis. We have asked for that deferral three times. We have not received a substantive response.

WHAT HAPPENS ON WEDNESDAY

A free 52-seat coach from Whittlesey has been arranged thanks to Cllr Roy Gerstner. Numbers in that room matter. Members need to see that this community is watching and that the people affected by this site expect their concerns to be taken seriously.

If you can attend, please do. If you cannot, the meeting will be available via livestream.

This is about whether a decision of this significance is taken on evidence that is complete, stable, and open to scrutiny. At present, it is not. Please spread the word and ask people to join the mailing list so we can keep the community updated.

Saxongate Residents Group 1st March 2026



SAXONGATE

SAXON PIT EXPANSION VOTE

Johnsons Aggregates Recycling Ltd | Planning Ref: 00024691VAR

OFFICERS RECOMMEND APPROVAL

WEDNESDAY 4 MARCH 2026
10:00AM
NEW SHIRE HALL, ALCONBURY
Free transport from Whittlesey available

If you have experienced:

- Dust
- Noise
- Odour
- Water or pollution concerns

This is your opportunity to stand up for Whittlesey and make your views clear.

FREE COACH FROM WHITTLESEY

To book a place: Message Saxongate on Facebook or email saxongate2026@gmail.com



We thank Cllr Roy Gerstner for sponsoring this transport and supporting our group.

The meeting will also be livestreamed and available later on YouTube. However, a strong turnout in the room sends a clear message.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD
SHOW THE STRENGTH OF FEELING IN WHITTLESEY

