

BROXBORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL

GRAVEL PIT, CHURCH LANE, WORMLEY
FOLLOW UP TO PLANT SITE REPORT 1979

Planning applications to continue extracting sand and gravel with infilling and to continue the preparation of soil for horticulture were submitted before the 30th June 1979 and subsequently were refused by the County Council and the Borough Council.

An enforcement notice was then served and became the subject of an appeal in March 1981 which was dismissed by the Secretary of State for the Environment but modified to require the completion of restoration by the 15th April 1983. Very little tipping occurred during the period up to October 1981, when the site was taken over by a waste disposal operator who substantially increased the intake of waste, but this led to various infringements of the waste disposal site licence and complaints from Church Lane residents.

By February 1983 it was apparent that the infilling would not be completed on schedule but in view of the steady progress being made, despite the slow start, legal proceedings were deferred because such action would have interrupted the works and caused unnecessary delay. Infilling was completed within the year, however, and imported subsoil was spread shortly after.

The site has been covered with soil to a depth in excess of the 12 inches required by the planning conditions and whilst such conditions by today's standards are inadequate, they have technically been complied with. In the absence of aftercare provisions, however, the site operator, who now owns the land, cannot be compelled to properly restore and manage the site. He is being encouraged to clear the site, level stockpiles of soil, stone pick, cultivate and seed the land. An access road and small area of hardstanding will be retained.

Without an aftercare commitment, the site will inevitably deteriorate, especially as the site owner feels that it has "hope value". There is a need for further works on site beyond the scope of the planning conditions which would include the importation of suitable clean topsoils, restoration works, and tree planting on the site boundaries to bring the site up to a satisfactory standard,