



Sixth form students involved in rocky decision

Sixth Form students from across the East Midlands will put themselves between a rock and a hard place when they participate in a public inquiry to decide whether or not permission should be given for a new quarry.

The Quarry or Not? schools event will be held today the British Geological Survey (BGS) headquarters in Keyworth, Nottingham. The event aims to raise awareness of environmental science and economic issues related to minerals extraction amongst schools and the general public.

The event has been organised by the BGS in collaboration with the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The event will target lower sixth form students of geology, geography, citizenship, government and politics and media studies. Students will be presented with a fictitious scenario that involves the proposed development of limestone quarry close to a National Park.

Andrew Bloodworth, Minerals Programme Manager at the BGS said: *"Quarry or Not? will heighten students' awareness of how society makes difficult decisions. Balancing the need for the raw materials such as minerals, which we need to maintain our economy and lifestyle with the need to protect our environment is a central problem of our time. Through this event, students will have an opportunity to participate in that decision making process."*

"Students are guaranteed an action packed, fun filled and informative day. The exercise will involve teamwork, time management, critical thinking, analytical, numerical, comprehensive, presentation and debating skills."

The day will culminate in a real life planning inquiry, wherein group leaders will be asked to present their case in front of a panel of three 'inspectors', all 'real life' professionals working on minerals issues..

The student teams will represent different stakeholders in the decision making process. They will play pro-quarrying groups such as industry, anti-quarrying environmental groups, as well as groups such as local authority planners and parish councils who would, in real life, have to take a balanced view on whether or not the quarry should go ahead.

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British Geological Survey (BGS), a component body of the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), is the nation's principal supplier of objective, impartial and up-to-date geological expertise and information for decision making for governmental, commercial and individual users. The BGS maintains and develops the nation's understanding of its geology to improve policy making, enhance national wealth and reduce risk. It also collaborates with the national and international scientific community in carrying out research in strategic areas, including energy and natural resources, our vulnerability to environmental change and hazards, and our general knowledge of the Earth system.

The participating schools are:

- Champion School, Bugbrooke, Northamptonshire
- Carlton le Willows School and Technology College, Gedling, Nottinghamshire
- King Edward VII School, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire
- Saint Benedict Catholic School and Performing Arts College, Darley Abbey, Derby

- South Wolds Comprehensive School, Keyworth, Nottinghamshire
- The King's School, Grantham, Lincolnshire