# Fife Council lifts redactions after campaigner's legal threat over Balmullo Quarry impact report



A recent intervention by campaigners against the expansion of Balmullo Quarry has led to significant changes in how environmental impact reports are presented by Fife Council. Following a legal threat from the campaign group, the council has removed what were described as “shock” redactions from these reports, allowing for a more transparent examination of the planned development's potential ecological consequences.

This change has uncovered troubling information regarding the impact of the quarry’s expansion on local wildlife habitats. The campaigners have raised alarms about possible harm to species such as pine martens, badgers, red squirrels, and foxes, asserting that the planned quarry expansion could “literally blow up” their habitats. Sally Northcott, a leading figure in the campaign, has expressed her concerns emphatically, questioning why any proposal would threaten such vulnerable species at a time when biodiversity is under increasing threat.

The expansion, proposed by Breedon, aims to double the quarry's size and extend its operational lifespan by an additional 20 years, with plans to extract a further 3.2 million tonnes of aggregate. However, local residents and the Save Lucklawhill community group have expressed vehement opposition, fearing that such developments would not only alter the landscape but also significantly disrupt their quality of life. Echoing these sentiments, Dr Northcott emphasised that over 700 species have been identified in the vicinity of Lucklaw Hill, making any potential destruction “outrageous.”

Concerns extend beyond mere species disruption; residents are apprehensive about increased noise pollution, dust emissions, and the loss of recreational spaces. The proposed expansion is expected to span an additional 12 acres, leading locals to fear adverse effects on their environmental and social landscape, including changes to recreational areas and increased hazards from mining activities. In light of these issues, community leaders argue for the need to scrutinise the proposals more closely to prevent irreversible damage to the local ecosystem.

Fife Council, responding to the campaign's claims, initially maintained some of the redacted information to protect sensitive species data but later clarified its position. Planning chief Pam Ewen indicated that the council had sought further expertise on conservation matters to strike a better balance between transparency and ecological protection. The revised approach now offers a more comprehensive view of the environmental impact assessments, which may aid in better informing public opinions and objections.

Anticipating the next steps, the campaigners intend to galvanise community support to formalise objections against the planning application. They urge fellow residents to become involved in the dialogue, arguing that collective action is paramount in challenging decisions perceived as detrimental to their environment. This grassroots mobilization reflects a broader trend of community engagement in environmental issues, as local groups increasingly assert their right to influence decisions that affect their livelihoods and ecological heritage.

The ongoing situation exemplifies a growing awareness and activism surrounding environmental conservation, especially in areas threatened by industrial expansion. As community groups like Save Lucklawhill gather momentum, the case underscores the importance of transparency in governmental procedures and the necessity of public involvement in safeguarding local ecosystems for future generations.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1, 2, 3, 4
2. Paragraph 4
3. Paragraph 3, 4
4. Paragraph 5
5. Paragraph 6
6. Paragraph 6
7. Paragraph 8

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

* <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/5244365/balmullo-quarry-report-redactions/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/fife/4905501/balmullo-quarry-extension/> - Residents of Balmullo are opposing a proposed extension of Breedon Quarry, fearing it would alter the landscape and impact their homes. The plan involves expanding the quarry by up to 12 acres to extract an additional three million tonnes of aggregate. Locals are concerned about the loss of recreational areas, destruction of habitats, and increased noise and dust pollution from blasting activities. A community group, Save Lucklawhill, has been formed to campaign against the proposal, highlighting the potential environmental and social consequences of the expansion.
* <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/5205393/balmullo-quarry-plans/> - Breedon Quarry has detailed plans to double the size of its Balmullo operation, aiming to extend its lifespan by 20 years and yield an additional 3.2 million tonnes of aggregate. The proposal includes expanding the quarry by seven acres and acknowledges potential encroachment into the Lucklaw Hill Wildlife Site. Mitigation measures such as diverting local paths and erecting screening bunds are proposed. However, the plan has faced opposition from the local community, with concerns about environmental impacts and the loss of recreational access to Lucklaw Hill.
* <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/business-environment/environment/5005278/why-are-balmullo-residents-battling-to-save-lucklawhill/> - Balmullo residents are actively opposing the proposed expansion of Breedon Quarry, which threatens to alter the landscape of Lucklawhill. The Save Lucklawhill group highlights concerns over increased dust and noise pollution, loss of recreational areas, and potential harm to local wildlife habitats. The quarry's expansion could lead to the destruction of heathland and impact ancient woodlands, raising environmental and community health issues. The group emphasizes the need to preserve the hill's natural beauty and ecological significance for future generations.
* <https://www.savelucklawhill.org/copy-of-key-impacts> - The Save Lucklawhill Community Action Group, formed in February 2024, aims to prevent the expansion of Balmullo Quarry. The group focuses on researching and disseminating information to the community to support objections to the proposal. They organize public events to demonstrate opposition and encourage public participation in challenging decisions they believe are detrimental to the environment and community well-being. The group's efforts are centered on preserving Lucklawhill's natural landscape and biodiversity.
* <https://www.savelucklawhill.org/heritage> - This page outlines the environmental concerns associated with the proposed quarry expansion at Lucklawhill. Issues highlighted include dust pollution from the quarry's pink felsite rock, noise from aggregate processing and blasting, and vibrations affecting nearby homes. The page provides information on how residents can report noise nuisances to Fife Council and emphasizes the importance of community engagement in addressing environmental impacts. The group advocates for measures to mitigate pollution and protect the health and well-being of local residents.
* <https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/planning-and-building2/planning/planning-applications/commenting-on-an-application> - Fife Council provides guidance on how individuals can comment on planning applications, including those related to quarry expansions. The page details the process for submitting comments, including the requirement to include the application reference number and the option to provide attachments via email. It also outlines the statutory periods for submitting comments, emphasizing the importance of public participation in the planning process. This resource is valuable for residents wishing to express their views on the Balmullo Quarry expansion proposal.