



16 September 2008

Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP  
Secretary of State  
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs  
Nobel House  
17 Smith Square  
London  
SW1P 3JR

Dear Secretary of State

LONGSTONE EDGE, PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK

You will know that in July the Court of Appeal gave leave to the Secretary of State and the National Park Authority to appeal against the High Court's decision on Backdale. We understand that this appeal is to be expedited, which means that it will probably be heard before the end of 2008.

Though we must applaud the Court of Appeal's decision, this has added another layer of complexity to an already very complicated situation. While we are encouraged by your willingness to explore solutions to the problems of Longstone Edge, we are concerned that you have not yet made any commitment to help achieve the most obvious solution, buying out the land covered by the 1952 planning permission. As a result, there seems to be little prospect of any solution before the Court of Appeal makes its decision.

In the meantime, the rate of destruction at Backdale has accelerated. Since April, the area affected by active quarrying at Backdale has grown by about one-third and the hill is disappearing at an alarming rate. Visitors, residents and our organisations are angry that nothing is being done to stop this. This would be somewhat lessened if you felt able to make a public commitment that matters will be finally resolved as soon as the Court of Appeal has made its decision.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet you to discuss this matter.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Chambers

Ruth Chambers  
Acting Chief Executive  
Campaign for National Parks

On behalf of the following organisations:

British Mountaineering Council

Campaign for National Parks

Campaign to Protect Rural England

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust

Friends of the Earth

Friends of the Peak District

Plantlife

Ramblers' Association

Save Longstone Edge

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