



What do we do at Lifford Lane anyway?

Our plant takes limestone from Derbyshire and enhances the purity to create precipitated calcium carbonate. The plant has operated since 1898.

We use no chemicals in the process and make bespoke products that go into everyday items as diverse as cat litter, baby milk formula, toothpaste and cereal bars.

Chances are you've bought products with ingredients made in our plant.

The Lifford Lane site

Our latest newsletter aims to keep the local community informed about our operations and activities. We have included information about our recent noise monitoring exercise and the upgrades we are making to the plant machinery.

Keeping in touch



You can use our contact details if you ever need to get in touch with the local team.

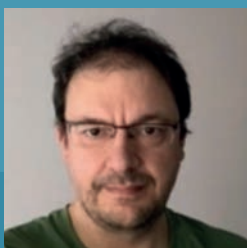


Supporting the local community



Proudly supporting the local environment

The team at Specialty Minerals consider themselves part of the local community and work locally to support residents and community groups. This has included working with local resident associations, such as Friends Of Lifford Reservoir, on litter picking days and environmental enhancements to surrounding footpaths and woodlands. We also sponsor Wythall football team.



Paul Smiles
Plant Manager

Meet the boss!

The plant manager at our Lifford Lane site is Paul Smiles, who has been based at the site since 2000. Paul is actively involved in local community projects and you can read about his latest role in local education on the back page.

Plant noise assessment



Sound emissions from Kings Norton Speciality Minerals (Minteq UK) site ("the Site") at Lifford Lane, Birmingham B30 3NU were assessed, following a series of previous assessments.

This was in accordance with BS4142 and also in relation to the impact reported by residents, including measurements in their homes in order better to understand how noise generated at the Site propagates into the community. This exercise took place over two nights on the evenings of the 12th to the 14th July 2022, to the early hours, to capture the quietest times at the noise receptor sites.

The plant was systematically shut off and restarted to determine the contributions of each element of the plant, to the noise emissions reported.

This was a substantial and comprehensive exercise. It means that noise data has been captured that identifies a detailed account of the contribution to overall Site emissions, made by each noise source reasonably believed to be causing or contributing to noise capable of amounting to pollution (as defined in the Environmental Permitting Regulations) at local receptors. That has resulted in a more detailed understanding of the level and characteristics of noise reaching local receptors that may result in significant adverse impacts (in BS 4142 terms). It has been possible to identify a further set of further potential mitigation measures that can now be undertaken, subject in some respects to additional examination of cost/benefit. The exercise has therefore produced useful "baseline" data against which the effects of those measures, once implemented, can be assessed.

The findings of this work support Sustainable Acoustics' conclusion that the overall operational sound is a complex blend of a number of separate sounds, with some of them contributing to the character in terms of tone and intermittency. It is only the E3A process that now stands out as being particularly noticeable and increasing the overall sound level in a clearly measurable way, distinct from other items of plant.

The sound of the E3A fits the description of the “jet noise” that has been complained about by residents. However, as the E3A does not always operate when residents have complained of this type of sound there remains some uncertainty. This exercise follows earlier works to E5, E3A and SFD, as agreed with the Environment Agency, which have reduced their sound output contributions.

The key step undertaken on this occasion in contrast with previous occasions, and over and above the strict requirements of BS 4142, was assessing sound levels outside and inside residential properties in key locations where complaints have been received. That has enabled the level and character of the sound experienced at particular locations – including individual façades of residential properties -- to be evaluated and correlated with individual operations and plant items at the Site. That has in turn enabled a better understanding of the measures likely to be beneficial in further addressing the level and character of sound emissions from key sources at the Site.

When applying the Best Available Technique/ appropriate measures standard under the Environmental Permitting regime, context is critical. It is a conclusion of the present report, based on the above findings, that the operation should continue to reduce and minimise the sound impact as far as reasonably practicable, using best available techniques and having regard to the established pattern of uses in the locality.

The results of the assessment exercise have been submitted to the Environment Agency who have approved the noise mitigation measures derived from the exercise and asked that they be implemented in accordance with a timetable to be set out in an action plan. The Noise Management Action Plan has now been approved by the Environment Agency. It is expected that a further BS4142 compliant assessment exercise will be carried out once the measures identified in the plan and approved by the EA have been implemented.

Sustainable Acoustics Ltd is an independent specialist consultancy providing acoustic design services to the built and natural environment.

Noise monitoring

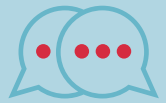


Lifford Lane is quite a busy area for commercial activities and from time-to-time noise crops up as a local concern. We have spoken to some residents in the past and in recent months undertook a local noise monitoring exercise in surrounding roads (both inside and outside of resident homes). Taking noise samples across a 24-hour period and operating all of our machinery during that time has helped us to identify if there are any issues and also to look at any mitigation measures we can take.

If you would like to come and meet us to learn more about the monitoring, the results and our response, then please...

...join us for a community listening meeting – see below.

Come and join us for a community listening meeting



Following on from our recent noise monitoring exercises, we would like to invite local residents in for a roundtable meeting onsite. We can provide updates on the findings and how we are responding to them. This is also a chance for you to ask any questions about our operations. Rather than set a date that is inconvenient, please email phil.briscoe@secnewgate.co.uk or call us on **07968 807377** to let us know you would like to attend a meeting and we can agree dates.





Plant manager Paul Smiles with Steve McCabe MP



Proudly supporting local schools

Hosting local visits

Our site has long been a key part of the local area but particularly after lockdown, we have sought to reconnect with local residents so that you know what we do here. In recent weeks, we have hosted visits by a number of local councillors and the Member of Parliament – Steve McCabe MP who is pictured with Paul Smiles onsite. It is a chance for them to see what we do, ask any questions and also pick up any constituent concerns with us directly.

Key facts about specialty minerals

- ▶ **48 full time employees** at Lifford Lane.
- ▶ Annual turnover over **£24 million**.
- ▶ Export products to **over 100 countries** around the world.
- ▶ In the last 3 years, we have invested over **£100,000 in making environmental upgrades** to our plant and machinery.
- ▶ Part of Minerals Technologies Inc, operating in **26 countries**.

Supporting local schools

Local education is very important to us and we have long supported the work of schools in the local area. This has included Paul Smiles serving as a governor of Broadmeadow Junior School, and he has taken over as Chair of the Governors from this term.

Speciality Minerals also supported the creation of a school minerals garden, which helped the children to understand the benefits and opportunities of growing their own food.

Keeping in touch



If you have any comments on this newsletter, community initiatives that you would like to discuss, or just have a question to ask, please contact us.