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Dates for the diary January to April 2018

Count the reindeer competition

The apprentice... You're hired!

Whilst our own recruitment process for the UK's first mobile plant operative apprentice hasn't featured on a prime-time TV programme, it is nonetheless a first in the quarrying industry and something that all those who have contributed can be justifiably proud. You can read more about Aidan and his training on pages 8 and 9.

Pedalling the safety message

As a business we have supported the MPA's Cycle Safe campaign for a number of years and I was delighted that so many Wiltshire school children attended and enjoyed the informative and interactive sessions hosted by Quarry Products in Calne. See page 3.

Planning for the future

It seems that much of our time as a business is spent preparing for or awaiting on the outcome of planning applications and the past months have been no exception! A number of applications have been submitted to Wiltshire Council, with the aim of harmonising waste management and mineral extraction activities at our Lower Compton site whilst minimising possible impacts on local communities. See pages 6-7.

Friendly faces front of house

The employees who are based at Wiltshire House have the benefit of seeing the smiling faces of Belinda, Hayley or Suzi on reception every day. For those employees working at our other sites, the feature on the reception team, which highlights their often unsung but indispensable roles, will help redress this imbalance! See page 13.

Merry Christmas!

Finally I would like to sign off by wishing you all a merry Christmas and a very happy, healthy and prosperous 2018.

Best wishes, Mike Hill, chief executive



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More than 130 school children will be safer on the roads following their participation at a cycle safety event hosted by Quarry Products.

Hills shares Cycle Safe adv

The event, which took place in Calne, was organised in support of the Mineral

Products Association's national Cycle Safe campaign; and used fun, interactive sessions, to highlight the dangerous zones for cyclists around large goods vehicles (LGVs).

Each session began with a presentation from Volvo Trucks to raise awareness about road safety. The children were then invited to get into the driver's seat of an LGV and mark on a diagram which of the cut-out cyclists, positioned around the



vehicle, they could see to understand the significance of the 'blind spot' areas around a lorry.

Peter Andrew, Group director Quarry Products, said: "It is important that vulnerable road users are protected when they cycle near our lorries. Our drivers have been trained to be aware of cyclists on the road, and our vehicles are fitted with audible warning systems and safety cameras, however, we know that the most effective way of helping cyclists understand the risks is to allow them to sit in the driver's seat of a lorry and experience what a driver can or cannot see."

COMMUNITY

Wiltshire Council and the Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service also attended the event to discuss essential bicycle maintenance checks, the importance of wearing the correct headgear and to provide cycle safety advice from the perspective of the Emergency Services.







In early November the first Management Conference for six years was held at the Alexandra Conference Centre near Wroughton.

After a hearty breakfast the day commenced with chief executive Mike Hill welcoming the 38 delegates who represented all the Group's operations and support functions. Mike outlined what he hoped would be achieved from the day and explained the format.

Exciting projects

The first session included presentations from Waste Solutions' divisional directors Steve Burns, Gary McKinnon and Ed Dodd; Nick King, Group director Homes and Peter Andrew, Group director Quarry Products – updating the audience about what was going on within the operational activities including all the exciting projects and associated challenges facing us in the future. This session was wrapped up by chairman Alan Pardoe who translated the operational plans into numbers including the issues and constraints which need to be considered.

At our best

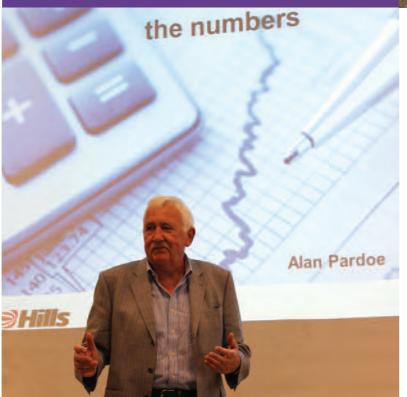
The rest of the day was led by Howell Schroeder, a professional facilitator who has worked with Hills at two previous conferences. In the session before lunch he organised the delegates into groups to think about and present back on 'what we do when we are at our best' and 'how we could do more of it'. This session produced a lively discussion and we heard stories from a number of delegates about things we do well and ideas about ways to improve.

These areas included communication, empowerment and decision making, risk management, importance of targets, leads pipeline and training.

The afternoon session saw groups look at what impressed them from previous employers or other companies they have come across which we could learn from. These ideas covered areas such as:

- Celebrating success
- Branding and engagement
- Becoming 'best in class'
- · Visibility and empowerment
- Team building
- Employee engagement and
- Freedom and trust.





The evening session included a more relaxed fun format! Howell introduced everybody to four highly accomplished jazz musicians who had not played together as a quartet before. Without any practice they proceeded to play a wonderful jazz standard and then explained the rules and communication methods that enabled them to do it. This was then demonstrated involving interactive exercises with the group producing some hilarious moments!

The Hills Group blues

High Penn Park, Calne

The band split everyone into groups over dinner during which lyrics and verses were written for the 'Hills Group Blues'! Following dinner this was performed and much to the enjoyment of everybody involved. Unfortunately the lyrics cannot be printed as there is no guarantee that this article will be read after the 9pm watershed!

The band played on while the delegates were able to relax and review the days' events until the early hours.



group session: Best practice from

oup session: ld

activity

- PERFORMANCE

take forward

Planning Update

It has been a busy few months following the outcome of the appeal process when Hills secured planning permission to extend and retain the MRF at Lower Compton.

The strategy is to develop modern waste management and recycling facilities, together with mineral extraction, that support the needs of Wiltshire. Hills' acquisition of the Sands Farm facility (a former concrete block works) in Calne provides an opportunity to review the original proposals for Lower Compton and provide a solution to address concerns of the local community regarding Hills' large goods vehicles and air quality in the area.

A number of planning applications have been submitted to Wiltshire Council which provide a long term transparent view of how our operations will be managed and can minimise the impacts on local communities.

Alternative MRF building at Sands Farm (M)

The proposed alternative MRF will occupy over a third of the 80,000 square feet existing building at Sands Farm. The remainder of the building will be used for other activities – all offering employment opportunities in the area. If this proposal is approved, the extension to the existing MRF building at Lower Compton will not be built. Planning application 17/10554/WCM

Internal link road (pink line)

An internal link road is proposed between the Lower Compton site and the Sands Farm facility. As weighbridge facilities exist at both locations it allows LGVs visiting the site from the north

and west to use the Sandpit Road entrance and vehicles from the south and east to use the Lower Compton entrance. This would remove LGV movements for waste and quarrying activities at Lower Compton and Sands Farm from the A4 through the Calne Town centre, thereby reducing the number of vehicles travelling through Calne Town centre.

The internal link road would only be open to LGVs visiting Hills' operations and will not be open to members of the public.

Planning application 17/10550/WCM

Lower Compton transfer station (A)

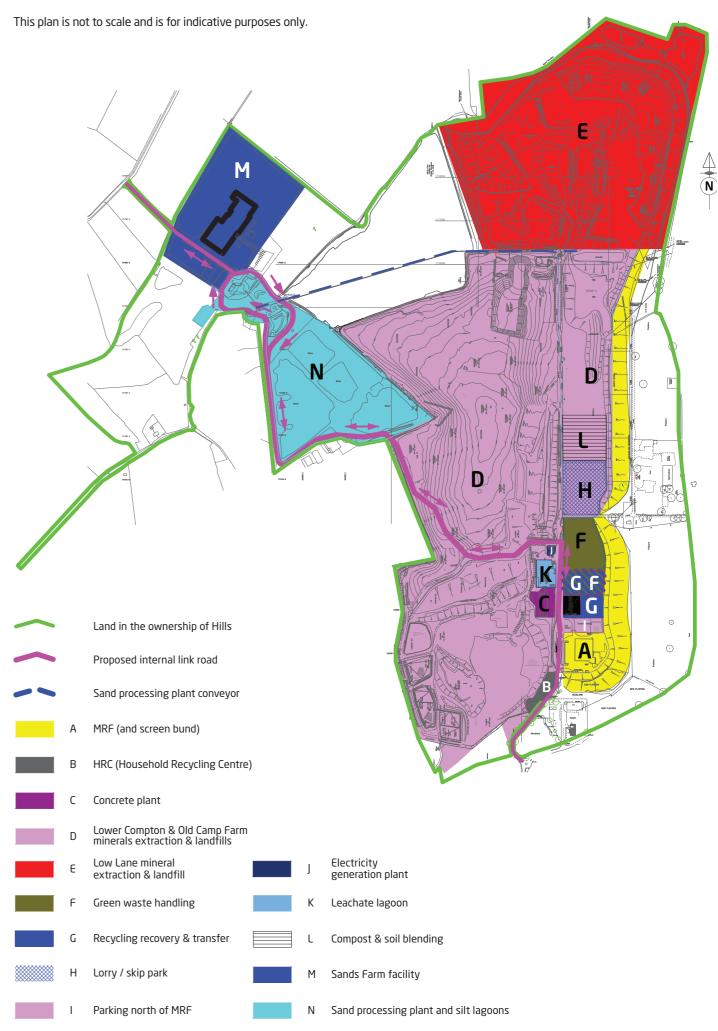
This application is to use what is the Lower Compton MRF (Area A) only for household waste and green waste transfer activities. This is in light of the proposal to relocate the MRF activities to the Sands Farm facility. Planning application 17/10557/WCM

Extension of time:

Lower Compton and Old Camp Farm (D) – extend the date for sand extraction until 2029, and the date for restoration by landfill until 2042. Planning application 17/10539/WCM

Low Lane (E) - amend the current landfill restoration permission for land at Low Lane to August 2029. Planning application 17/10543/WCM





Hills unearths industry's first MPO apprentice

Quarry Products has recruited the UK quarry industry's first mobile and static plant operator (MPO) apprentice.

The news follows Quarry Products' announcement in 2016 that it was looking to recruit the next generation of employees and address the increasing skills shortage throughout the industry.

The number of young people joining the quarrying industry has significantly declined over the years with statistics showing that only 17 percent of the quarry workforce in the UK is aged between 18-34*. *source MPOC





As a result, Hills worked closely with training provider Mentor, to create and put into practice a structured and engaging apprenticeship programme; before actively targeting school leavers and existing college students to showcase the career opportunities available within the industry.

Candidates then spent a day at a working quarry to see the type of work they would be expected to undertake and the conditions in which they would be working.

Aidan, who is based at Hills' Shorncote Quarry near Cirencester, began the MPO apprenticeship in September and is due to complete his studies in December 2018 with Level 2 Diplomas in both Plant and Processing Operations.

Aidan spends 80 percent of his time on-site undertaking practical based learning, which includes operating mobile and static plant, and understanding the theoretical requirements for

the role delivered by Mentor and other training providers. The remaining 20 percent of Aidan's time is spent off-site shadowing employees in order to understand the different roles within the industry.

Reflecting upon his new role, Aidan said: "I am really enjoying my time at Hills. I have been given more responsibility than I have had before and everyone has been helpful, patient and friendly. It is a great environment to be in."

Peter Andrew, Group director Quarry Products, said: "We are delighted to have Aidan on board; he has settled in extremely well and has shown a real flair for the tasks he has been set and is coping well with the pressures of learning whilst training."

Peter continued: "This is a real achievement for Hills and the quarrying industry. Hopefully this will set a benchmark and Aidan will be the first of many to join Hills as an apprentice."







Homes' £1,500,000 contribution to Calne...

Developers like Hills Homes must meet a number of requirements before planning permission for housing developments will be granted. This includes obligatory payments to the local authority, known as Section 106 (S106) agreements.

S106 payments are used by local authorities to improve the surrounding area, and ensure that where possible the development makes a positive contribution to the local community. Typical applications of S106 payments include public open spaces, affordable housing, education, highways and improvements to public realm.

Homes' latest development, High Penn Park in Calne, Hills has contributed almost £1,500,000 towards the Calne community through the S106 agreement. Here's how it has been divided:

Education

£711,928



Developing the educational facilities available in Calne

Transport and footpaths

£325,000





To improve bus services, traffic calming, footpath routes and cycle ways

Green spaces

£320,000



To create and maintain new open spaces in Calne

Sports and recreation

£135,682



Improving the facilities available at Calne Leisure Centre

Calne Cemetery

£7,340



Contributing towards maintaining this significant site in Calne

As Nick King, Group director Homes explains: "Hills cares about the communities where it builds and works closely with the local council to provide facilities that will be seen as an asset to the local community. Not only do we benefit the community through S106 Agreements but also through charitable giving and the Landfill Communities Fund which has seen Hills provide Calne with contributions towards a new skate park, improved facilities at various sports clubs and maintaining the town's historic lock to name a few."

High-ly sought after properties at High Penn Park

As phase one begins to take shape at Hills' High Penn Park development in Calne, a new sign has been erected to present a warm and professional welcome to anyone driving past or visiting the site.

The official launch of Hills' largest ever development is not due to take place until January 2018, however a number of properties have already been sold off plan.

The site provides an attractive mix of two, three and four bedroom houses, apartments and coach houses. If you wish to find out more about High Penn Park, a detailed brochure can be downloaded from: hills-homes.co.uk



Development update - COMING SOON...

Southside Farm, Corston (shown right)

Southside Farm, located on the edge of the beautiful village of Corston, north Wiltshire, consists of 13 exquisite two, three and four-bedroom homes. Look out for more information on this exciting development in the new year.

Holdcroft, Blunsdon

As we go to print Hills has just been granted planning permission for 54 new homes at Holdcroft, Blunsdon.



NEW PROJECTS AND DEVELOPMENTS



The Wiltshire House

reception team

Meet the faces from front of house

Update on renewable energy project at Westbury

In September 2015 planning permission was granted to Northacre Renewable Energy to develop an advanced thermal treatment plant on the open land between Hills' existing Northacre Resource Recovery Centre and Arla Foods at Stephenson Road, Northacre Industrial Park, Westbury.

Since then, Northacre Renewable Energy has been engaging with technology and financial partners in more detail.

Earlier in October a significant milestone was reached when Northacre Renewable Energy secured a 'Contract for Differences' with the Low Carbon Contracts Company. This ensures that a fixed, pre-agreed price will be paid for the low carbon electricity that the plant generates.

The supplier of the gasification technology is the subject of

ongoing contractual discussions with the project's proposed engineering, procurement and construction contractor.

A Section 73 amendment to the existing planning permission will be made in due course to include an increase in the height of the buildings and an increase in stack height to comply with emerging Environment Agency guidance.

Keep up to date with developments at: hills-group.co.uk/northacre-energy

COMMUNITY -



For the fifth year running Hills has sponsored the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) Wiltshire Best Kept Village Competition.

The competition judges assessed the 43 competing villages on criteria including: the state of roadside hedges and walls, residential gardens, public areas and buildings, footpaths, churchyards, notice boards, litter and community spirit. The winners in the three categories were

- Great Bedwyn: Large village (population over 1,000)
- Mildenhall: Medium village (population 300 to 1,000)
- Tollard Royal: Small village (population under 300)

Hills will be continuing its association with the CPRE competition as an agreement has been reached to extend the sponsorship in to a sixth consecutive year.



For employees based at the Wiltshire House office in Swindon the reception team of Hayley Miller, Belinda Peapell and Suzi Hinton are friendly and familiar faces. Handling switchboard calls and welcoming guests are just two aspects of what is a busy and varied role.



As reception coordinator Hayley Miller explains: "Reception's role is to provide a professional, efficient and friendly front of house function to visitors and employees at Wiltshire House. We all work part-time so good communication between us is essential."

The variety of work on reception is clearly an appealing aspect of the role as Belinda Peapell revealed: "Every day is different, ranging from greeting visitors to helping with enquires on the phone and in the office. I am here to greet customers with a smile and cheery voice. A happy environment makes a happy me."

The post room behind the reception desk is another busy hub where both incoming and outgoing internal post, letters and parcels are sorted and passed on to the relevant employees.



In addition to the very visible front of house duties and daily inspections of toilet and kitchen facilities, much of reception's work can go unnoticed. From booking meeting rooms,



maintaining stationery supplies through to replenishing the drinks machines in the Robert Hill Lounge, coordinating maintenance and repairs and

keeping a record of accidents and near misses in the building.

When asked what she enjoyed most about the role, Suzi Hinton reflected a sentiment shared by all three members of the team when she said: "Well of course the two lovely ladies that I work with and how well we all work together. Everyone here is so nice and helpful. I can ask anyone for help and it's never any trouble."

"A happy environment makes a happy me."

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Thanks, you did a great job!

Employees from nine HRCs transfer to FCC Environment

In May this year it was confirmed that Waste Solutions had been successful in winning four out of the five Wiltshire Council waste management contracts. Purton and Honeyball HRCs were retained - however the management of the other nine HRCs was awarded to FCC Environment.

This meant that on 2 October, 27 employees involved in the running of the nine HRCs (Amesbury, Devizes, Everleigh, Marlborough, Melksham, Trowbridge, Salisbury, Stanton St

Quintin and Warminster) become FCC employees under a process known as TUPE (the Transfer of Undertakings, Protection of Employment, Regulations 2006).

Chief executive Mike Hill commented: "Whilst we were delighted to win four out of the five contract lots, we were disappointed to lose the nine HRCs, having successfully provided this public-facing service to Wiltshire Council and the residents of the county for the past 20 years. We were equally disappointed to have to say goodbye to our colleagues (pictured below) who continued to deliver a high standard of service during what was a difficult time leading up to the transfer. I would like to thank them for their efforts and wish them all the best for the future."



Christopher Jenkinson























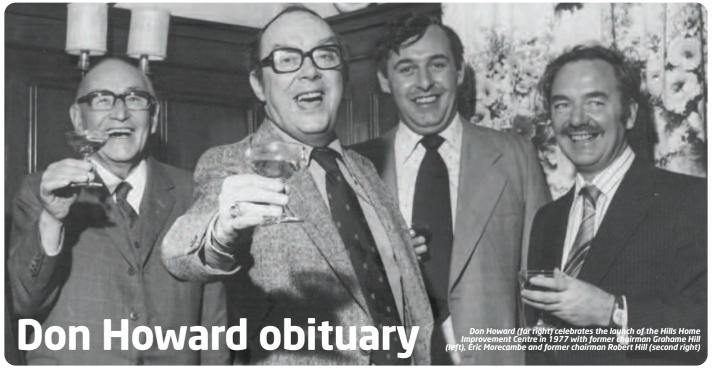




All employees shown are HRC recycling operatives, unless otherwise stated.

Not pictured: Christopher McMenamin; Clive Williams; Garren Hall (LGV driver), Kevin Coombs (LGV driver), Maximillian Villeneuve, Paul Gorley, Roger Ford (mobile plant operative), Sayed Youssef Mahmoud Mohamed, Steven Orchard

Read more about the Wiltshire Council waste contract wins in future issues of intouch.



On 8 September 2017 former Hills managing director Don Howard passed away aged 89. Mike Hill takes a look back at his life and contribution to the company.

Don was born on 27 November 1927 in Swindon. Described as a mischievous schoolboy he balanced that with his enjoyment of singing as a choirboy! Throughout his life Don could never sit still and developed a passion for cycling, winning many club medals for his speed and endurance.

Rallies and hill climbs

Later in life this passion led to flying gliders which he did not only in this country and also in Europe and New Zealand. He also loved rebuilding cars to enter in to rallies and hill climbs.

National service

After completing his national service he studied company law and accountancy and married a lovely Welsh girl called Netta, setting up home with her in Swindon. His business career took off and he moved to Bath to work as an accountant with his wife and two

children, Nigel and Christine. In 1969 he was appointed general manager and director of Hills of Swindon. There was no M4 in those days and the commute between Bath and Swindon took two hours in each direction!

Increased profitability

Don would look at and enjoy reading a financial ledger like a book of fiction and it is no surprise that during his time with the company we saw a period of increased profitability and expansion. He took great pleasure watching the development of the Cotswold Water Park from gravel pits to the thriving leisure facility it is today.

Shrewdness

Don kept in touch for many years after retiring from the company. He would meet my father Robert for lunch regularly and I remember being invited along to these 'get-togethers' which I thoroughly enjoyed with Dad and Don. Don had lost none of his shrewdness and his mind was as inquisitive as ever. His questions regarding how the business was going got straight to the point and his sense of humour was definitely still intact! He made a significant contribution to the company during his time with us and he will never be forgotten.

Long service milestones - congratulations!

30 YEARS Bill Wills, metal fabricator

25 YEARS Bob Tapp, recycling area manager;

Mick Chivers, quarry manager

20 YEARS John Chapman, recycling area manager; Derek Woodward, mobile plant operative; Antony Brown, skilled operative

15 YEARS Peter Nash, LGV driver; Monique Hayes, Group communications manager; **Liz Carr**, senior credit controller; **Steven** Burns, divisional director - Waste Solutions; David Prewett, LGV driver; Andrew Hyde, mobile plant operative; Barry Bartholomew, LGV driver

10 YEARS Stephen Smith, mobile plant operative; Paul Godowski, mobile plant operative; Paul Hill, kerbside recycling manager; Paul Dark, foreman; Henry Newbery, recycling team manager; Paul Elling, compliance manager; Jane Parsons-Hann, accounts consultant; Martin Wigg, LGV driver: Robert Smith, kerbside loader: Mark Pinnock. kerbside LGV driver; **Anthony Evans**, mobile plant operative; **June Parrott**, credit control manager; **Richard Swatton**, sales representative;

Lynette Hemming, senior accounts clerk; Paul Weinling, kerbside loader

Look out for a long service recognition scheme in 2018!

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Support for the homeless at Christmas

In addition to the charitable donations the company makes throughout the year, Hills will once again be donating the money saved from distributing its Christmas cards electronically to two local charities for the homeless.

Threshold Housing Link and Doorway Wiltshire will each receive £150 to continue providing vital support to the homeless over the festive period and throughout the year. Hills will also be supporting Swindon's Christmas Care for the thirteenth year with the provision of waste collection services and a collection of non-perishable items for people using the temporary shelter over the Christmas period.

2018 dates for the diary

January

Monday 1st, New Year's Day (bank holiday) Tuesday 2nd, Annual Leave Trading Window closes

February

Saturday 3rd, 6 Nations Rugby Championship starts Friday 9th to Sunday 25th Winter Olympics, South Korea Wednesday 14th, Valentine's Day Friday 16th, Chinese New Year of the Dog

March

Thursday 1st, St David's Day (Wales) and World Book Day Sunday 11th, Mothering Sunday Saturday 17th, St Patrick's Day (Ireland) Sunday 25th, Daylight Saving Time starts Friday 30th, Good Friday (bank holiday)

Monday 2nd, Easter Monday (bank holiday) Saturday 14th, Grand National Monday 16th to Saturday 28th - Annual Leave Trading Window Saturday 21st, Queen Elizabeth's birthday Monday 23rd, St George's Day (England) Monday 30th, Hills' financial year ends

Count the reindeer competition



How many reindeer can you find in this year's Christmas competition? All you have to do is identify how many reindeer are hidden in this issue of intouch and you could win one of four £25 Amazon gift vouchers - but take care, as some are harder to find than others.

When you think you know the answer add your name and location to the form below, and then scan and email your entry to info@hills-group.co.uk or send this page via the internal post to the communications department at County Park. A competition entry sheet can also be printed from eTouch. Entries must be received no later than Friday 2 February 2018.

Number of reindeer (including the large one featured on this page)

Name

Location