

Dungeness Borrow Pit

Frequently Asked Questions

November 2011

The Environment Agency and Dungeness B power station (part of EDF Energy) have recently submitted a joint planning application to continue to recycle shingle from the Dungeness Borrow Pit to protect the essential flood defences at the power station and the Broomhill and Denge frontages.

Why do we need shingle?

Shingle beaches are an important part of the flood defences along the south coast, acting as a cushion against the pounding waves. But with the majority of our weather coming from the south west, over time the waves slowly push the shingle around the coast so that it piles up in one place, leaving the rest of the coast with less of a 'cushion'.

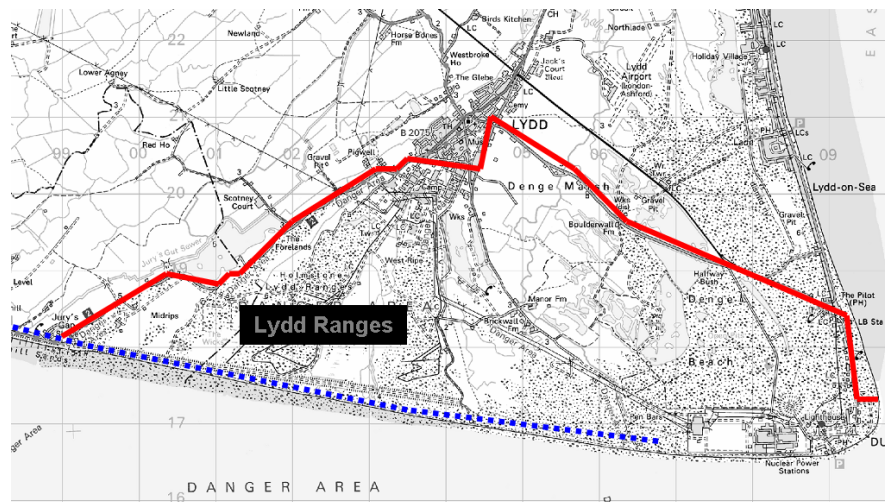
It is important that there is sufficient shingle around the coast to maintain the current standard of flood protection to the residents and businesses of Romney Marsh. The Environment Agency, EDF Energy and their predecessors have been successfully recycling shingle from the Dungeness Borrow Pit since the 1960s. It is the most practical way to protect the Marsh from flooding whilst providing value for money for the tax-payer.



Shingle recycling at the Borrow Pit, November 2006

What does the work involve?

The work involves excavating shingle from a section of beach (100-200 metres) on the eastern side of Dungeness peninsula. Shingle is loaded onto lorries and transported along public roads (shown in red) to Broomhill, west of Dungeness and placed along the frontage (shown in blue). Shingle will also be taken (via road) to the bund in front of the power station using all-terrain dumper trucks.



Route for transporting shingle

What does this mean for beach users?

Whilst there will have to be some restrictions on the beach in order to do the works safely, the only area of the beach that will need to be completely closed off to the public is the loading area during working hours (100-200 metres). The rest of the beach will remain open to the public.

We understand that Dungeness is an important beach for both the local economy and for its amenity value. This is not a new practice for the area and in the past we have been able to successfully manage the works to minimise the impact on beach users.

The management of the works is flexible and we are confident that by continuing to work with local people we can make sure that as much of the beach as possible remains undisturbed.

Why does the planning application cover six months each year?

We have proposed that shingle recycling will take place annually between October and March. We will not need to work continuously during this time, but having permission to work within this period will give us the flexibility to do further recharge if a winter storm damages the shingle defences.

You haven't been using the Borrow Pit recently, why did you stop?

Recycling shingle has an effect on the Dungeness Special Area of Conservation, and in 2007 we stopped using the Borrow Pit and started to explore how we might minimise this effect whilst still maintaining the defences.

We have worked closely with Natural England to find a solution which meets the needs of both people and the environment.

Does it have to come from the Borrow Pit? Have you looked at alternative sources?

Since we stopped using the Borrow Pit in 2007, we have been importing shingle from the Brett quarry in land at Lydd. Buying shingle from a quarry is much more expensive, costing around three times more than recycling it from the Borrow Pit.

We have also explored off-shore recycling but again this is much more expensive for low volumes. Recycling shingle from the Borrow Pit provides the best value for money for the tax payer and means that we can stretch public funds further to reduce the risk of flooding to more homes and businesses.

Why can't you take shingle from the lifeboat station?

We have investigated whether we can recycle shingle from the lifeboat station but historic information has shown that the volumes of shingle here are less predictable than at the Borrow Pit.

Also, the shingle ridge habitat that has developed there is very rare and we would have a legal obligation to re-establish this habitat elsewhere. Unfortunately there is no-where locally where we could recreate this habitat, and if there were, the costs of doing so would be prohibitive.

Are the quantities of shingle in the planning application enough to protect the Marsh?

Yes they are, when considered within the larger context of flood defence works planned for the Marsh. We have designed schemes at Broomhill Sands and Lydd Ranges which will improve the standard of protection for the next 50 years. These schemes involve importing massive amounts of shingle from off-shore then maintaining the level of shingle each year using the Borrow Pit.

Without the schemes, the Borrow Pit could not supply the amounts of shingle needed to provide the standard of protection we are aiming to achieve.

What would happen if you can't use the Borrow Pit?

Shingle recharge is a key component of the forthcoming flood defence schemes at Broomhill Sands and Lydd Ranges. If we have to pay more to source shingle from elsewhere there is a possibility that funding for the schemes may be further delayed.

How will you minimise the impact on the local community?

We are keen to ensure that our shingle recycling works have as little impact on the community as possible and we will be holding a public drop in session shortly to discuss local concerns about the works and how we can minimise disruption.



Overtopping at Lydd Ranges

How can I view the planning application?

You can view the planning application on the Kent County Council website here (reference number SH/0381/2011):

http://www.kent.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/planning_in_kent/planning_applications.aspx

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03708 506 506

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www.environment-agency.gov.uk