

New Crofton Co-operative Coal Mine Proposal



The Project

We are proposing to establish a small drift mine to the south east of the village of Crofton and north and east of the small hamlet of Wintersett.

The mine will be owned and run by a Workers Co-operative, New Crofton Co-op Colliery Limited.

The mine will employ around 50 workers and produce 3000-6000 tonnes of coal per week (the extraction rate varying with the seam being exploited at any given time).

The site has a long history of involvement in coal mining and was originally used by British Coal to store and then load coal onto the railway.

It was subsequently earmarked for development as an opencast coal and fire clay mine by the British Coal Opencast Executive (BCOE), a project which our founder member, Bill Birch, was involved in.

BCOE's detailed investigations make us confident that the coal is there and we intend to submit a planning application to develop the site shortly.



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Jobs

We expect the mine to employ around 50 full time staff once production is underway.

These will be well-paid, highly skilled “proper” jobs which will last for the duration of mining, which we expect to be until 2036.

We are committed to ensuring that at least 50% of the workforce comes from the local area.

We expect that there will be a core of experienced miners but the majority of workers will be new to the mining industry and will be trained up “on the job”



Investment

Over the life of the mine we will invest a minimum of £10,000,000 into the local community through a community fund.

We also intend to invest around a further £40,000,000 of the mines profits into developing other co-operative enterprises in the region.



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What is a Co-operative?

Co-operative businesses are owned and run by and for their members.

All Co-operatives share a common set of values and principles which dictate how they behave.

As well as giving members an equal say and share of the profits, co-operatives act together to build a better world.

In the case of the mine the members are the people who have set the project up and the people who will work in the mine.



The United Nations estimates that the livelihood of nearly 3 billion people is made secure by co-operative enterprises worldwide.

In the UK, 15.4 million people are members of Co-operatives.

In the UK there has been a long tradition of co-operatively owned mines from the only recently closed Tower Colliery in South Wales right back to the mid 19th century with Co-operative societies such as the Darwen Industrial Co-operative Society owning and operating mines.

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Community Engagement

As a Co-operative we consider ourselves to very much be part of the community.

As such we feel that it is very important that we work closely with the local communities (Ryhill, Havercroft, Crofton and Winterset) and have been doing so for around 18 months now through a community liaison group.

We will continue to work closely with the community through the life of the mine.



Community Liaison Group

Discussions with various local partners has led to the formation of a Community Liaison Group which has met several times and which will continue to meet as the project progresses.

The group has members from all the parish councils, district council and private and voluntary sectors.

This group will be instrumental in setting up the community fund.

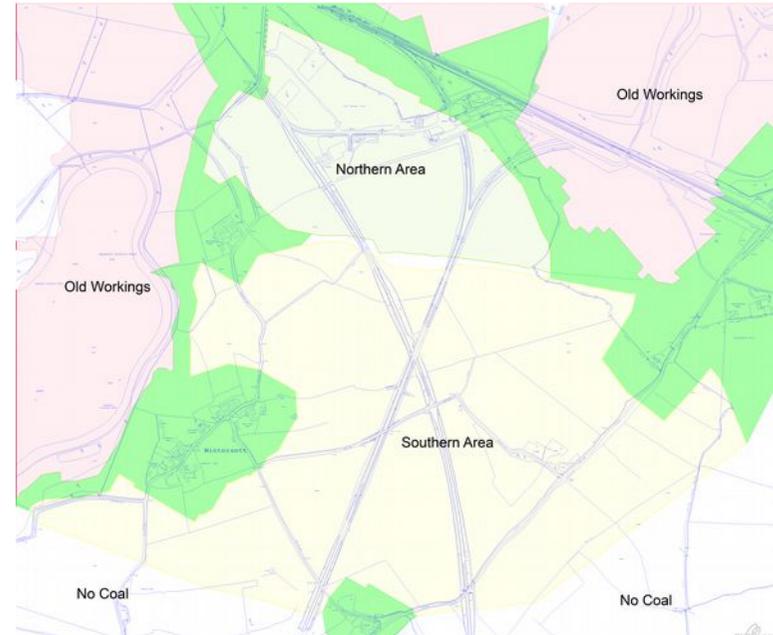
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Geology

There are 4.9 million tonnes of recoverable coal arranged into four seams which are separated into two areas (North and South) by a major fault.

We expect to spend 5 years mining in the North and 16 years in the South.

The red areas in the graphic to the right are old coal workings, the dark green areas are areas which are not worked as they are barrier pillars safe guarding houses on the surface and existing old coal workings.



Room and Pillar Mining

Coal is excavated by a continuous miner from a series of 10 x 6 meter rooms which are separated by 10 x 10 meter pillars.

The coal is then shuttled back to a conveyor and transferred to the surface for processing prior to shipping off site.

The graphic to the left shows the northern area with the rooms as white areas and the pillars as grey shaded squares. The yellow and green areas are barriers which are not mined.



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Community Fund

We will set-up a community fund which will receive a minimum of £10,000,000 from the mine over its' working life.

The fund will be operated as an independent charitable company with a board will comprising representatives from the Colliery, Ryhill, Havercroft, Crofton and Wintersett.

To maximise the impact of the fund we will be working with the local community to develop a community strategy over the next 18 months.



Co-operative Investment

The Co-operative will be investing around 45% of it's profits into the development of other Co-operative enterprises in the region.

We estimate that this will be around £40,000,000 and we hope to leverage in a similar amount from other like-minded investors.

The Co-operative will favour investing in enterprises which deliver social, financial and environmental returns.

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What will be happening during Construction?

- The site will be fenced off
- The ground will be prepared including laying roads and other areas of hardstanding
- Buildings will be put up on the surface
- Tunnels will be dug from the surface down into the coal (the drifts)
- The existing footpath through the site will be diverted through the woods to the south



During construction, work will be undertaken on the site from 6am to 10pm, 5 days a week.

We expect that the construction phase will take around 6 months, during which time there will be heavy vehicles occasionally coming and going from the site.

We have undertaken detailed environmental impact assessments and our experts are satisfied that noise and dust from the site will not impact anyone living nearby.

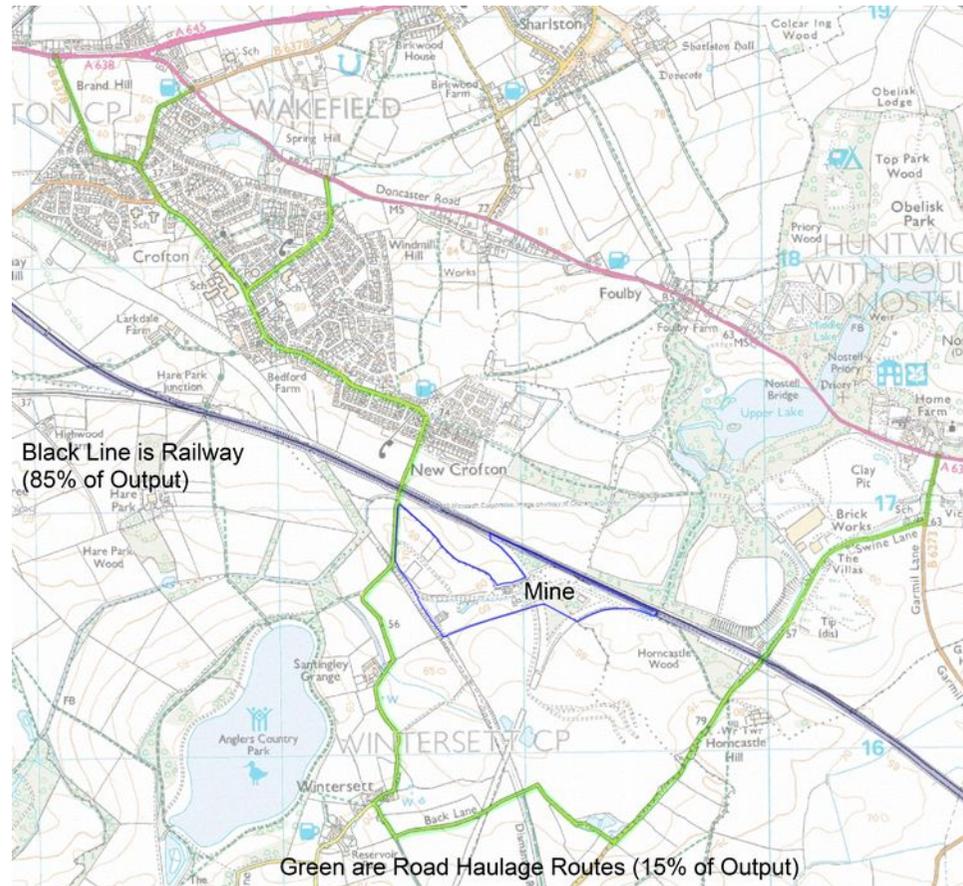
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What will be happening during production?

The mine will operate two shifts a day, from 6am to 2pm and 2pm to 10pm hours, 5 days a week.

During working hours the conveyor belts will operate.

The mine fans and pumps will operate 7 days a week.



We expect 3-5 trains per week to stop at the mine for loading.

Loading will usually be in the afternoon, but never finishing later than 6pm.

We expect 4-8 lorries to leave the mine each day, except for Sunday.

We anticipate that some of these will go through Crofton and some through Winterset Village, as shown in the map to the left.

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Legacy

Several things will happen once production finishes:

- The drifts will be made safe and sealed off
- The surface buildings will be taken down
- Roads and hardstanding will be removed or covered over as appropriate
- The site will be restored to its former state



- The diverted footpaths will be restored to their original routes
- The Community Fund will hopefully continue
- 50% of the Co-operatives Investments will be transferred into a permanent legacy fund for Co-operative and Community development

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