

Firm wants to search for tin at beauty spot

The county planners have put off making a decision on a proposal to prospect for tin in one of the last wildernesses of Cornwall, but have given permission for prospecting to continue for lead, zinc and silver at St Kew.

Geevor Tin Mines Ltd. want planning permission to prospect down a three and a half miles length of the Wither Brook. They want to start half a mile from Minions village and follow the river down to Trewartha Marsh.

The area includes some of the wildest and most beautiful stretches of the moor officially designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value and Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The valley contains many ancient monuments, and Geevor's suggested prospecting area contains many of them. In fact, the famous Hurlers, three stone circles, is within a few hundred yards of the company's suggested starting point near Minions.

PROTESTS

The proposals have roused a storm of protest and Mr. Leslie Heeper, County Councillor for Altarnun, who spent much of his early life in the area, predicted at Monday's county planning committee that the objections would be "colossal."

Geevor Mines is suggesting prospecting in three stages, starting with 20 bore holes drilled down to four feet depth, which would then be deepened down to bedrock. Phases two and three would comprise 31 holes and 54 holes, all of four inches diameter.

If the company found tin or any other minerals it would then look for planning permission to work it by gravel pumping operations and a small treatment plant.

Already there are divergencies of opinion. Linkinhorne Parish Council, for instance, is strongly against it and is specially concerned about possible pollution of the water.

IN FAVOUR

On the other hand, St. Cleer Parish Council is in favour of the application, North Hill Parish Council says it has no views, and North Cornwall District Council thinks three years' permission for prospecting should be given.

Cornwall Naturalists' Trust is objecting because of the great scientific interest of the area, Cornwall Archaeological Society objects to any schemes which might damage sites.

And Cornwall Committee for Rescue Archaeology wants to carry out a detailed survey of the valley, which it says is of "great archaeological interest."

The archaeological committee is willing, however, to consider some help from Geevor in excavating and surveying if it can be assured the damage is not going to be great.

There are also fears that if the prospecting should reveal china

clay deposits the mining company might be tempted to pass on the information to china clay interests.

In the meantime, the county planning committee is waiting to hear what the South West Water Authority has to say on the subject of water pollution.

When the Authority's comments have been received the whole matter will come before the planning committee again, with all the objections listed for consideration.

Local residents are also worried about possible pollution of the water, and about the effect of heavy lorries loaded with ore travelling on the narrow moorland roads.

ST. KEW MINE

Planning permission has been given for prospecting to continue at the derelict Trewethan Mine at St. Kew in a search for lead, zinc and silver.

The permission was first given for three years in 1977, and this expires on March 8. Mr. H. St. Louis-Cookes has now been told a further two and a half years.

Two residents, Col. G. B. Brown, of Watergate, Trellil, and Mr. G. T. Blewett, of Pengenna Farm, St. Kew, have objected, but North Cornwall Council supports the application provided water supplies are safeguarded.

Conditions include no buildings or machinery to be erected without the county planning authority's permission, and work to be permitted only between 7 a.m. and 12 noon on weekdays and no work at all on Sundays.