Delivering for the nation
... supporting the recovery

Heavyweight champion
making the case for concrete

Footprint for the future
cutting carbon

One man’s mission
Brian’s legacy
THE MPA’s first year seems to have passed very quickly since our formal launch at Showroom 09. It has been a very active time and I hope our members and external stakeholders alike will feel it has been positive and productive.

We faced a number of initial challenges, not least in bringing together three major organisations into one cohesive and dynamic whole. I am pleased to say that it has been achieved and we feel we now have a structure that gives MPA a sharp focus and clear agenda and objectives. The synergy within the mineral products sector had been evident for some while, but it is for the first time operating as an integrated industry with increasing influence as well as better use of resources.

I am delighted that the integration process has been achieved with real enthusiasm from members in all our product areas and we are as a result seeing a surge in support for regional and other events. We are also enjoying a healthy influx of new members who recognise the benefits of a united voice.

One particular facet of our restructuring has been the decision to elevate sustainable development so that it now underpins our policy-making process. We did so not just because it is the responsible approach but because we have a powerful case.

We hope you enjoy this issue and will welcome your comments and suggestions.

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Chairman, MPA

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Unfair to communities

COMMUNITIES in quarrying areas - originally identified by Government as the priority for help from the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund - are being short-changed when money is distributed, says MPA.

The scheme was designed with the express intention of supporting community and environmental improvement schemes in areas affected by aggregates extraction. New research from MPA reveals that the proportion of the levy going to benefit communities is in reality less than 1 per cent of total revenue.

In the last eight years, the levy has raised a total of £2,590 million, of which £168.1 million (6.7 per cent) has been used to finance the ALSF, but of that only £18.95 million has been allocated to and spent by local authorities. Some have diverted ALSF funding into other areas of their general budgets.

MPA believes the fund should continue as long as the levy remains in force but that its management should be reviewed to avoid “creeping migration” of funds into the general exchequer.

MPA is calling for ALSF spending on communities in quarrying areas to increase by at least 13 per cent and ideally by up to 50 per cent of the total fund from 2011-12 onwards. It also wants measures to be introduced to ring-fence ALSF money in order to ensure that it is used for its intended purpose.

Encouragement has, however, come from former Environment Minister Dan Norris who, in a recent parliamentary debate, indicated that his department was looking at better targeting of ALSF into quarrying communities.

Supporting areas affected by quarrying is a must for the industry.

“I see the ALSF fund as a tool to bring about social improvements,” Mr Norris said.

“Some of this money has been used for community activities but I think that is quite minimal. I would like to see it being used more widely.”

MPA welcomes the government’s commitment to ring-fence and increase the fund for the industry and says it should use it more to support communities in quarrying areas.

Tax since 2002: £2.500m
Assigned to ALSF: £168m
Communities share: £18.95m

“The views expressed in Mineral Products Today are not necessarily those of the Mineral Products Association.”

Copyright: Mineral Products Association 2010

New Government dialogue

The new Government will be the target for an intense lobbying effort by MPA as it seeks action to reform a planning system it believes is not fit for purpose.

The industry is concerned that likely reforms will not wholly recognise the special nature of minerals extraction, nor the fact that minerals development is very different from run-of-the-mill construction.

Says MPA executive director Simon van der Byl: “An urgent dialogue is needed with the new regime to communicate the fact that the long-term nature of minerals planning and the investment that goes with it require a dedicated and different approach.

“We are particularly concerned that a drift towards localism could mean an intensification of parochial and nimbystreHTre attitudes. Location is fine in its place but it does not work when difficult strategic decisions need to be made in the national interest.”

Management of the public sector debt is another Government challenge in which the industry has a major interest. With deficits likely for years, the overall debt will rise and so will annual debt interest payments. Historically, Governments have dealt with such problems by cutting investment – an approach set out in the March Budget.

“But if we are to make real progress in dealing with outstanding national problems such as the poor condition of the road network and the chronic and growing undersupply of low-cost housing, Government must put funds into these areas,” says Simon van der Byl.

With every £1 invested in construction generating £2.84 of economic activity, the industry believes it has a key part to play in the rate of economic recovery – as well as improving infrastructure and quality of life.

CO2. The EU Emission Trading Scheme sector will stick with a targeted 21 per cent reduction by 2020 (based on 2005 levels) rather than make a unilateral commitment to 30 per cent or the absence of other countries signing up to a similarly demanding next stage. MPA Cement said the move could have left its members vulnerable to unfair international competition. It had warned that members could opt to move their UK operations offshore if the European Union moved to a 30 per cent carbon reduction plan. The result, it said, would be that jobs would be lost and carbon would effectively “leak” from the UK to countries without comparable constraints.

The debate comes at a time when UK producers are already in the vanguard of the European movement to cut CO2 emissions, with an overall 40 per cent reduction between 1990 and 2008.

Pal Chana, MPA’s executive director for cement and lime, says: “The European Union has taken a leadership role in responding to climate change and its current 20 per cent target is already an ambitious one. Our concern was that the UK Government resisted pressure to increase its commitment unilaterally.”

The European Union has set key conditions to move from 20 per cent to 30 per cent. In particular, it wants other developed countries to commit themselves to comparable emission reductions and developing countries to contribute adequately.

“These conditions have so far clearly not been met,” says Pal Chana.

“The 2009 Copenhagen Accord has demonstrated that, whilst other countries are willing to take action to tackle climate change, they are not willing to take comparable or equivalent actions to those proposed by the European Union.”

He added: “The UK cement and lime industries fully support the Government’s ambitious CO2 reduction targets, but we must maintain a level playing field at a global and European level in order to maintain a healthy domestic manufacturing industry. Other threats to the UK cement and lime industries’ international competitiveness continue to hang over their heads, not least adoption of a benchmark on which CO2 allocations will be made from 2013 onwards.”

What the UK industry is doing on carbon - see page 8.
The birth of a new Parliament with 322 newly-elected MPs taking a fresh look at the issues of our times presents both a challenge and an opportunity for MPA. It is one which chief executive Nigel Jackson is determined to grasp with both hands. "In many senses, we start with a blank canvas and there will never be a better time to build a better awareness of the essentiality of our industry and the fact that we are achieving very high levels of sustainability," he says. "At the same time, we need those who represent us at Westminster to understand that we face considerable problems and need their cooperation, because without a healthy mineral products industry they will find it difficult to deliver their agenda."

While a big player in its own right, the mineral products industry is more significant still when you recognise that it is the major material supplier to the construction and manufacturing industries which are so vital to the nation’s economic performance – and its recovery. "This is a positive agenda for our industry and Government," says Nigel Jackson. "We are not presenting Government with a shopping list of demands, but setting out how we can contribute to improving our built environment and enhancing our natural environment. Our relationship with Government is critical, as is its response to a number of key issues."

Economic issues inevitably come at the top of the MPA’s agenda as its looks for a period of economic stability. Without the resulting confidence, operators are unlikely to be prepared to invest for the future and so contribute to the recovery. Cost, complexity and taxation are a particularly big disincentive for international companies that could opt to invest elsewhere.

The need for a ‘licence to operate’ is equally fundamental. Reasonable access to mineral resources has long been an issue, with operators still pleading for an effective, simpler and faster planning system that is based on realistic assessments of future demand. While accepting the need to be effectively regulated, the industry says it is overwhelmed by an often conflicting volume of legislation from both Westminster and Brussels. Often, such legislation is “gold plated” by the time it is transposed to the UK. But perhaps the issue that frustrates Nigel Jackson most is the failure of Government to recognise the progress that has been made by the industry. "We have come a long way over the past 20 years and are now a world leader in the fields of recycling, restoration and biodiversity," he says. "We are contributing to the evolution of both the built and natural environments and we are making real inroads in tackling climate change."

Yet still all too often our achievements go unrecognised and there is a failure to make these contributions to the wider agenda. "We are contributing to the evolution of both the built and natural environments and we are making real inroads in tackling climate change."

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IT is a startling fact that around 27 per cent of the UK’s CO2 emissions come from homes as the energy for which we pay so dearly seeps into the atmosphere. Construction methods that retain warmth in winter and reduce the need for air conditioning in summer must then be the future. Concrete has, of course, been popular – even to those on the inside of the industry with timber and steel still comes as a surprise – even to those on the inside of the industry that produces it. There can, however, now be no doubt that concrete and masonry construction is winning some key victories.

The key to the advantage of masonry and concrete lies in what is known as “thermal mass” – put simply, the capacity of a material to store heat and store it until exposed to cooler conditions when their temperature

**Rocky roadshow**

GRAVEL is great is the title of a new schools roadshow that will be making its way between primary schools in Wiltshire and Gloucestershire over the coming months.

Support from Natural England via the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund has enabled the Cotswold Water Park Society to develop an educational programme that includes a video celebrating the gravel extraction that has paved the way for creation of a 40 square-mile park that is now bigger than the Norfolk Broads.

The park includes 10 lakes and six grasslands that are of SSSI status and attracts over 28,000 waterbirds every winter to its nationally important wetland.

More info on the schools initiative from www.waterpark.org

**Heavyweight is champion**

There is now growing awareness that, when it comes to making our built environment more carbon friendly, concrete has the answers. As a local material that travels short distances from the point of production, it scores heavily. But buildings that use traditional heavyweight construction materials are also much more energy efficient.

"The wide range of inherent benefits of heavyweight construction is seeing off the challenges of lightweight solutions.”

**Lightweight is champion**

The wide range of inherent benefits of heavyweight construction is seeing off the challenges of lightweight solutions.”
ConCreTe

the project team saved half the embodied
re-use of the original 1960s concrete frame,
Faced with the choice of demolition or
Elizabeth II Court. Winchester headquarters, now known as
Hampshire County Council’s revitalised
stakeholders. The campaign gets underway
which seeks to establish pride within
pace with the launch as this issue goes to
Concrete’s credentials in bidding for
targets.

FROM clients to builders, architects and
specifiers – everyone in the construction
sector is now talking about how best to
achieve the Government’s sustainability
targets.

Concrete’s credentials in bidding for
recognition as the lead material is gathering
pace with the launch of this issue goes to
press of a new “This is Concrete” campaign,
which seeks to establish pride within
the sector and create a dialogue with
stakeholders. The campaign gets underway
with a series of ads in specifier journals
like the one shown here which features
Hampshire County Council’s revitalised
Winchester headquarters, now known as
Elizabeth II Court.

Faced with the choice of demolition or
re-use of the original 1960s concrete frame,
the project team saved half the embodied
energy by revitalising what
existed. Concrete from
the elements that were
demolished was recycled, crushed and re-used as
aggregate. Use of the
available space was much
improved, with the original
625 occupants now doubled
in a building that is naturally
cool in summer and warm in
winter. It has been achieved
with exposed concrete soffits,
solar shading and intelligent
lighting and water-saving
systems. Computer modelling
has predicted that the
carbon footprint in terms of
emissions of CO₂ per square
foot per year should reduce
by around two-thirds.

Heavyweight is champion

... heavyweight scores in terms of fire
resistance, flood resilience and sound
insulation

This is concrete

its benefits in terms of fire safety and
and social landlord shows that heavyweight
construction can reach the highest levels of
the Government’s Code for Sustainable
Homes, the national standard for sustainable
design and construction. As well as
sustainability credentials, heavyweight scores
in terms of fire resistance, flood resilience and
sound insulation.

Phoتو courtesy Hills Homes

Concrete proof

WITH day-to-day operation of UK schools resulting in emission of over nine million
tons of greenhouse gases every year, the world of education has an important part
to play in a sustainable future. As our case studies here demonstrate, concrete is being
chosen not just for its energy efficiency but because it is flexible – and looks good.

At school

John Perryn Primary School, Acton, London

A project that incorporates both a
primary school and children’s centre and
is designed over two floors to create a
light-filled building. A concrete panel wall
slab system allowed for rapid construction
and high quality, durable exposed internal
finish. The frame was constructed in just
35 working days. Solid concrete walls and
exposed ceilings provide thermal
mass which is enhanced by night-time
cooling, cross-ventilation and high levels
of daylight. The building achieves a 33 per
cent saving in CO₂ over current building
requirements.

Highbury Grove and Samuel Rhodes Schools,
Islington, London

Samuel Rhodes is a special educational
needs school which shares a site with
Highbury Grove secondary school. The new
£13.6 million building caters for 1,400 children
and was erected around existing buildings
that needed to be kept in use during
construction. A concrete frame provides a
flexible and adaptable structure. Exposed
concrete soffits and walls reduce the need
for expensive and maintenance-heavy
finishes and provide thermal mass to
reduce energy needs. The new building
generates 20 per cent of its energy from
on-site renewable energy installations.

Joseph Chamberlain College, Birmingham

Joseph Chamberlain is a new £29 million
college overlooking the city of Birmingham.
Fronting onto two busy roads, it has been
designed as a crescent around
a quiet garden, with concrete
providing an effective acoustic
barrier. The main buildings
have a largely exposed fair-
faced, in-situ concrete frame,
providing thermal mass and
so reducing mechanical
heating and air conditioning
requirements. Concrete was
chosen for the aesthetics of

You can follow the new campaign and contribute your
own experiences to the debate via www.thisisconcrete.co.uk.
Footprint for the future

Carbon is one of the great challenges for the mineral products industry. It is of particular relevance to cement and lime as energy-intensive operations where extreme heat is fundamental to the production process. The commitment is substantial and the progress encouraging.

Looking around you and you may not see it. Look again, and cement is pretty well everywhere. As a critical ingredient in concrete, cement is the stuff on which our modern lives are built and is essential for economic and social well-being. Given its role in our homes, schools, hospitals, roads, bridges and much more, it is no surprise that concrete is second only to water as the most consumed substance on the planet.

But the human benefits that flow from cement are only possible given kiln temperatures of 1,450ºC – equivalent to the heart of a volcano. It is only with such heat that you can bring about the chemical change that transforms limestone into “clinker” – cement before it is ground down to a powder.

By its nature, it is inevitably an energy and carbon-intensive process. Globally, cement production accounts for around five per cent of total CO₂ emissions. Here in the UK, the industry is responsible for about two per cent of the nation’s carbon footprint and long ago accepted that it has a part to play in fighting climate change.

The industry strategy has three key stages: short term to 2015, medium term to 2030, and long term to 2050. The short-term campaign recognises that 60 per cent of the CO₂ arising directly from cement manufacture comes from the decomposition of limestone, a chemical process that is unavoidable. The remainder comes from the kiln fuel. Smaller amounts of CO₂ are produced from delivery of the end-product and the generation of electricity used by the industry.

During the last decade, the industry lowered its CO₂ emissions from 924 to 776 kilogrammes per tonne produced. This means that in absolute terms CO₂ emissions were cut by 3.7 million tonnes in ten years. It has been achieved through heavy investment in new plant and technology and the use of waste-derived fuels.

In absolute terms, CO₂ emissions have been cut by 3.7 million tonnes in ten years. This trend of investing in energy efficiency and increasing the use of waste derived fuels – particularly biomass – will drive the medium-term strategy. There is a role too for increasing the production of factory-made composite cements which involve replacing clinker with wastes from other industries such as pulverised fuel ash and ground blast furnace slag.

The industry is also investing in research into new low-carbon cements and concretes that have a lower embodied CO₂ content. Crucially, it will also play a more proactive role as a key player in the construction supply chain, and work with designers to increase recognition of the energy efficiency properties of concrete.

In the case of asphalt, the industry has looked underw ay, the overall potential is significant. In the case of asphalt, the industry has looked beyond its own boundaries and is working with key customers including the Highways Agency to develop what is known as the Asphalt Pavement Embodied Carbon Tool (aPEcT) which will ensure consistency and transparency in reporting progress.

The first phase of the project has focused on asphalt production and use in highway courses. The remainder of the project will see development of further modules which extend to include the full road structure and its whole life. Sustainability issues other than climate change will also be considered.

TEAM EFFORT

Asphalt and aggregates are achieving similarly impressive improvements in energy efficiency. MPA has been working closely with the Carbon Trust to develop and implement a carbon reduction programme for the aggregates and aggregates products sectors. With several substantial company initiatives underway, the overall potential is significant. In the case of asphalt, the industry has looked beyond its own boundaries and is working with key customers including the Highways Agency to develop what is known as the Asphalt Pavement Embodied Carbon Tool (aPEcT) which will ensure consistency and transparency in reporting progress.

The first phase of the project has focused on assessment of greenhouse gas emissions from the production and use of asphalt in highway courses. The remainder of the project will see development of further modules which extend to include the full road structure and its whole life. Sustainability issues other than climate change will also be considered.

The commitment to cutting carbon comes despite the fact that current market conditions do not optimise production or emissions efficiencies.
Delivering for the nation . . . supporting the recovery

MPA has launched an agenda which identifies five key strategic priorities to enable the industry to help deliver the Government’s own economic, environmental and social aspirations. In the coming months the association and its members will be taking the MPA’s messages shown here to key political audiences across the country to raise awareness that supporting mineral products will help boost the recovery from recession.

1: Economic conditions that support investment
A stable economy is now fundamental, as is a less onerous attitude to tax. Only if the Government commits to and delivers long-term investment will MPA members, particularly those with international operations, have confidence to spend in the UK.

2: Better Government support for an essential industry
The industry needs more effective Government sponsorship and a more coordinated policy approach from its many departments. It will deliver sustainable solutions for the built environment in return for a more rigorous science-based evaluation of the credentials of competing materials.

3: A reasonable “licence to operate”
The UK can only enjoy the benefits of its mineral products if the industry has a sound licence to operate. That means an effective, simpler, more consistent and faster planning system based on realistic assessments of future demand.

4: Proportionate legislation and regulation
Proper regulation of industry is important but the industry is faced with an overwhelming and often conflicting volume. The cumulative burden is massive. New legislation must be fit for purpose and not unfairly “gold plated” when transposed from Brussels to the UK.

5: Recognition of progress
The industry is a world leader in the quality of its operations and best in Europe at recycling and resource efficiency. It is also a big contributor to overcoming the challenges of climate change and of sustaining the UK’s biodiversity.

Every year, the UK mineral products industry supplies over £5 billion worth of materials, directly and indirectly employs over 60,000 people and underpins the vast £110 billion construction sector.

FACT: Every £1 invested in construction generates £2.84 in total economic activity – mineral products.
FACT: With the added time taken to have a site allocated in local development plans and gain supporting consents from the Environment Agency, it can take ten years or more to achieve planning permission for a new mineral site.
FACT: Britain is a world leader in recycling not just materials but land for beneficial after-uses. Recycled aggregates now make up 25% of the market – the best performance in Europe.
FACT: On average, MPA members deliver one million tonnes of mineral products every working day – more than oil, gas and coal put together – to support the sustainable development of the UK.

For a full copy of the MPA agenda visit our website www.mineralproducts.org
Brian Butterfield was one of those few people whose ground-level input to the mineral products industry has made a real difference to its reputation. He was a restoration manager but also forestry manager, farm manager and conservation manager – beyond all else, a countryman. He not just managed land but loved it and recognised the substantial potential offered by quarrying for enhancement. Brian’s untimely death in February brought to an end a 48-year association with Lafarge Aggregates’ Panshanger operation near Hertford. What he achieved there is quite incredible. Having filmed Brian for MPA Showcase 09, we allow him here to take us on a tour of his beloved bit of England.

The estate

“Panshanger Park was regarded as one of the most perfect schemes and incorporated the River Mimram as a main feature. When we bought the estate it was pretty derelict. A lot of rough pasture with birch and thorn scrub – no forestry management for 40 years. It was, nonetheless, part of the heritage of England. You probably wouldn’t get permission to quarry a place like this today but we have carefully worked pockets and probably made it a better estate. You couldn’t afford to do that without quarrying because the land isn’t really very high grade agriculture. Without mineral working, it had no future.”

The Panshanger estate covers 440 hectares, of which 90 hectares is in the local mineral plan and about half is restored to lakes and agriculture. At one time, the quarry produced around 350,000 tonnes of sand and gravel a year. “Brian was one in a million; someone so special can never be forgotten. We will remember him in every tree that we see in Panshanger Park.”

Annie Butterfield (a colleague who shared Brian’s surname)

River

“The River Mimram runs through the middle of the Panshanger quarry. It’s one of the few chalk streams left in Hertfordshire and is known for its brown trout and grayling. We do quite a lot of management on the river with the help of the Environment Agency. We have, for example, put logs into the stream to speed up the flow in places and to create bays in other places. In doing so, we have effectively created a spawning ground for wild trout. Repton diverted the Mimram to make two lakes but we, as part of the quarrying process, put it back on its old course.”

Lake and ponds

“We are about half a mile from Hertford town centre, which is hard to believe as you stand here. This was the first of a series of lakes that we dug – it was restored about seven years ago. In the winter time, apart from swans, coots, moorhens and Canada geese, we have a lot of overwintering duck like pochard, mallard and mandarin. We even have two pairs of egrets here. We allow fishing to the island but the area from there to the road is for conservation. I have just put some dragonfly ponds in for the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and I think it will, with a bit more work, become their top site for dragonflies. There are also Norfolk reeds as an attempt to attract the bittern back.”

Agriculture

“This is the last area to be restored; it’s been drained and is now going into five years of agricultural aftercare by sowing initially with conservation crops which will put the soils back to their original state, and will also attract birds, butterflies and insects. Some will be sown with millet for song birds. The green area over there is American sweet clover, which is good for bees and butterflies and went in last year as a further stage in the aftercare. I contracted with Jordans to produce rye for breakfast cereals from one area, we got 95 tonnes of good quality rye in 2008.”

Woodland

“We have about 250 veteran trees in the park and amongst them is what is said to be one of the oldest oaks in the country – 500 to 600 years old. As we go through the woodland you will see a lot of younger planting and views we have left through to the park. To date, we have planted about 65,000 trees – we had to do a lot of replanting after the gales in the 80s. The management of the woodland is time consuming but its worth it.”

Bat cave

“This is the old ice house that supplied ice for the original mansion. With the help of Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, we have made it into what’s known as a ‘bat hibernaculum’. We have put a door on which has cut-outs to give access to the bats. Inside, we have bat boxes beside the entrance and in the main tunnel. So far, we have two species living here.”

“Brian’s video tour of Panshanger is available from the cinema area of www.mineralproducts.org. Go to Showcase and look for Kate Humble’s biodiversity update.”

Kerry Howard

“His knowledge for the land – immense His feelings towards Lafarge – intense Truly proud of our reputation Experience beyond expectation A truly irreplaceable man seemingly with us since records began.”

Kerry Howard

One man and his mission

Brian Butterfield was one of those few people whose ground-level input to the mineral products industry has made a real difference to its reputation. He was a restoration manager but also forestry manager, farm manager and conservation manager – beyond all else, a countryman. He not just managed land but loved it and recognised the substantial potential offered by quarrying for enhancement. Brian’s untimely death in February brought to an end a 48-year association with Lafarge Aggregates’ Panshanger operation near Hertford. What he achieved there is quite incredible. Having filmed Brian for MPA Showcase 09, we allow him here to take us on a tour of his beloved bit of England.

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Pothole Britain: ‘snow tax’ introduced to pay for crumbling road repairs

As one of the partners in the Asphalt Industry Alliance, MPA has been pressing Government to end the perpetual under-funding of highway maintenance. On the day before the AIA published its latest damning report, Chancellor Alistair Darling announced a £100 million emergency fund to help councils deal with potholes after the worst winter for 30 years. But will it be enough?

The general condition of our roads was not helped by the fact that utility companies dug 2.5 million trenches.

The problem for councils was that, thanks to the problems that appeared after February 2009’s snow, they found themselves with a £400 million hole in their maintenance budgets at a time when they were already underfunded to the tune of £800 million. This means that the Chancellor’s £100 million emergency fund is welcome but will not solve the long-term structural problems which must concern councils.

The total cost of bringing the country’s roads up to scratch has, says the ALARM survey, now risen to £9.5 billion, an increase of 12 per cent on the previous year. Local authorities in England estimate that it would take a minimum of 11.5 years to catch up on the backlog of repairs at present rates of funding. In Wales, the backlog would take 15 years to clear.

According to the report, reactive maintenance – the costs of dealing with emergency repairs rather than planned works – consumes a quarter of the average maintenance budget. The work must, however, be carried out if roads are not to become unsafe.

Utility companies with their trenches have become a real issue, with nearly 90 per cent of local authorities saying that they should be charged for knock-on costs. Even if properly reinstated, deep trenches weaken the structure of the road and shorten life by 38 per cent. Charging the utilities would free up around 13 per cent of planned maintenance budgets.

The AIA is calling for a new approach to funding roads maintenance, including sustained, longer-term budgets, which would allow for proper planned maintenance. It also wants the maintenance spend to be better protected within local authorities.

AIA chairman Mike Linley said that the increase in government funding over recent years was “a drop in the ocean” compared to what was needed to “stop the rot”. “Extreme winter weather would not cause so much damage if our roads were fit for purpose,” he added: “Local authorities that prioritise road works.”

He added: “Local authorities that prioritise road maintenance budgets report higher levels of resident satisfaction and falls in compensation payouts of up to 30 per cent.”

The data comes from a survey undertaken for car maker Kia which said that its dealers in worst affected areas reported a 150 per cent increase in owners reporting damage from broken roads. Suspension failure, damaged alloy wheels and split tyres were widespread, with the average repair bill running at £175.

Tadworth motorist Bianca Lee-Chang said: “You are hard pushed to move a few hundred metres without falling foul of a pothole. I had a nasty encounter with one last week and spent two hours waiting for a recovery, followed by a £200 bill for the pleasure.”

While the survey lists Cambridgeshire as the place with fewest potholes, Leeds City Council reckons that it too is doing well having upped its maintenance budget by £92 million between 2005 and 2011 thanks to a one-off capital windfall available from the sale of the Leeds Bradford Airport. This allowed the council to invest in “real and lasting improvements” that have already resulted in claims for compensation falling by 30 per cent, and a significant improvement in public perception.

THE dubious title of Britain’s most potholed county goes to Surrey, where a total of nearly 2,000 were recorded in a recent survey, twice and many as second-placed Hampshire with Kent close behind in third.

“Extreme winter weather would not cause so much damage if our roads were fit for purpose in the first place.”

POTHOLE LEAVING HOLES IN BUDGETS

Peril of 120,000 unfilled potholes

BRITAIN’S ROAD IN £10 BILLION POTHOLE PIT AS WINTER RAVAGES ROADS

CHANNEL 4 named Britain’s pothole plight “streets of shame” and was inundated when it invited viewers to submit their own favourite hole in the road pictures. Such has been the clamour over our pockmarked roads in recent months that potholes now even have their own website where you can report latest eruptions and get help with filing claims.

For car maker Kia which said that its dealers in worst areas reported a 150 per cent increase in owners reporting damage from broken roads. Suspension failure, damaged alloy wheels and split tyres were widespread, with the average repair bill running at £175.

Tadworth motorist Bianca Lee-Chang said: “You are hard pushed to move a few hundred metres without falling foul of a pothole. I had a nasty encounter with one last week and spent two hours waiting for a recovery, followed by a £200 bill for the pleasure.”

While the survey lists Cambridgeshire as the place with fewest potholes, Leeds City Council reckons that it too is doing well having upped its maintenance budget by £92 million between 2005 and 2011 thanks to a one-off capital windfall available from the sale of the Leeds Bradford Airport. This allowed the council to invest in “real and lasting improvements” that have already resulted in claims for compensation falling by 30 per cent, and a significant improvement in public perception.
SuSTAInABILITy

Proving good progress

YOU might be forgiven if, in the wake of the most devastating recession in living memory, you allowed your commitment to the issue of sustainable development to slip a little. The MPA, MPA Cement and BMAPA have each published sustainable development reports which show that real progress is still being made.

As MPA chief executive Nigel Jackson puts it: “This is a massively challenging commercial environment in which to operate let alone drive forward sustainability issues. Yet we are still doing just that, and are determined to do better still.”

“I believe we have arrived at a point where applying sustainability principles to a business is now a mainstream contributor to the bottom line. Most companies now also accept that they have to improve transparency, performance and communications, not just by behaving sustainably but gathering and reporting the hard data needed to verify their claims.”

The MPA’s sustainable development report is its first since the new organisation was launched and is noteworthy because it brings together the full range of products that now fall under the umbrella of mineral products. With cement and concrete now running alongside aggregates, asphalt, industrial sand, lime, mortar, recycled and secondary materials, there is a much bigger picture of performance in critical areas.

MPA draws particular satisfaction from the rapid acceleration in resource efficiency over recent years. The use of recycled and secondary aggregates in Britain climbed to a Europe-leading 25 per cent of the market by 2005 and has remained broadly stable.

Restoration of quarried land has enjoyed similar success and has helped to transform the image of the industry. Long term success is, however, now threatened by difficulty in attracting sufficient clay-type inert materials to fill the voids created by extraction. MPA is, nonetheless, pleased that the Government has accepted its representations and confirmed it will not extend the scope of landfill tax to include materials used for quarry restoration.

The report also comments on the ground gained in terms of stakeholder accountability, with widespread community engagement helping to resolve issues and release positive benefits for society. The experience has enabled companies to shift from compliance and crisis-driven engagement to an approach based on partnership.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM MPA

- Since 1999, MPA members producing aggregates and mineral products have reduced HSE-reportable injuries by 80 per cent
- The cement industry recorded a 40 per cent reduction in absolute CO₂ emissions between 1990 and 2008
- MPA members planted 126,799 trees and built 3.5km of dry stone walls
- Recycled and secondary materials now make up 25 per cent of the GB aggregates market - the highest rate in Europe
- The concrete industry already significantly exceeds the Government’s 2012 target for the responsible sourcing of construction materials
- 700 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) were originally mineral operations

Smaller footprints at sea

MARINE aggregate operators are making substantial inroads into both their carbon and dredging footprints, according to the latest sustainable development report from the British Marine Aggregate Producers Association (BMAPA).

Latest data shows that although reported production fell by just over four per cent in 2008, CO₂ emissions reduced by more than 14 per cent overall and by 10 per cent per tonne landed. Meanwhile, the area of seabed licensed for dredging fell by nearly five per cent. Another significant figure revealed by the report is that hours dredged reduced by nearly 13 per cent, which suggests that on-board screening or processing was less intensive. That in turn means less sediment being returned (flowing) back into the sea.

The report relates to a year in which the industry landed just over 13 million tonnes of sand and gravel in England and Wales, of which some seven million tonnes went to London and the Thames corridor. The total sand and gravel market in England and Wales was 64 million tonnes.

BMAPA chairman John Miller says that while carbon represents a major challenge, the industry starts with an important advantage because it delivers large volumes close to the point of demand, with minimal lorry miles to complete deliveries.

Another key issue is the recent royal assent enabling them to fulfil their roles for society.

Copies of the reports referred to here can be downloaded from:
MPA Sustainable Development Report 2009  www.mineralproducts.org
BMAPA Sustainability Report December 2009  www.bmapa.org
Performance 2008: A sector plan report from the UK cement industry  www.cementindustry.co.uk
The reputation of recycled aggregates is being harmed by some producers who are failing to follow a quality protocol developed by the Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to ensure that inert demolition waste is converted into aggregates that comply with European standards.

The concern comes from MPA’s Aggregates, Asphalt, Recycled and Slag Product Groups which says that less reputable non-MPA producers are failing to follow guidance designed to provide a benchmark and to ensure uniform standards. The protocol is currently undergoing a five-year review and MPA has expressed concern that insufficient site visits are being made to operators whose standards are questionable. Quality protocols are also being considered for other materials such as pulverised fuel ash, furnace bottom ash, incinerator bottom ash and steel slag that can be used as aggregates.

Sustaining our soils

LIME supplied by the mineral products industry has an important role to play in a new Government strategy designed to protect soils across England from a series of modern threats.

The Agricultural Lime Association is championing the cause, working with farmers, environmental and academic bodies on the “Safeguarding our soils” strategy as part of the new Soils Advisory Forum. It has stressed that acidification is a significant threat in the breakdown of soil structure and that the maintenance of the correct pH levels is fundamental in sustaining and protecting UK food production.

The MLA says that the importance of regular liming is often understated. It points out that if acidity increases above neutral levels, it will eventually lead to a considerable reduction in fertility, crop yield and profitability. While mineral soils will naturally turn acidic, lime losses are accelerated by leaching due to rainfall, crop off-take, use of fertilisers with high ammonium nitrate concentration and pollution due to acid rain and other pollutants.

Concrete evidence

The concrete industry’s second annual sustainability performance report sets out a bold vision for 2012: to be recognised as being the leader in sustainable construction.

The new report builds on the benchmark data first published in 2009 when 14 performance indicators were identified. This year, there is not just a data update but 12 clear targets (plus some in development) for achievement by 2012. Notably, they include a reduction of 17 per cent in the level of CO2 emissions as a proportion of concrete output against a 1990 baseline figure. The industry also aims to further increase the use of material diverted from the waste stream for use as fuel from 17.3 per cent in 2008 to 21 per cent by 2012. And it is setting out to increase the percentage of by-products, such as fly ash from power stations and ground granulated blast furnace slag from the steel industry, used as a proportion of cementitious materials to 33 per cent.

“These are real targets that the concrete industry is committed to achieving and, where possible, exceeding,” says Andrew Minson, executive director of MPA The Concrete Centre. “They are not vague promises but commitments to action that will build upon the good work already achieved and on the inherent sustainable performance benefits of concrete.”

TARGETS FOR 2012 INCLUDE:

- Increase production sites covered by a UKAS-certified environmental management system from 72% to 85%
- Reduce CO2 emissions as a proportion of production output from 88.1kg to 85.1kg per tonne
- Increase material diverted from the waste stream for use as a fuel source from 17.3% of total energy use to 21%
- Reduce convictions for air and water emissions per year from six to zero
- Increase percentage of relevant production sites that have site-specific biodiversity action plans from 94% to 100%
- Reduce reportable injuries per 100,000 direct employees per year by 50% between 2009 and 2014 with an aim of zero harm.

MPA has voiced a “serious note of caution” over a decision by the West Midlands Regional Assembly to change the way future supplies of sand and gravel are provided for. Under new proposals, the balance of provision would shift away from Staffordshire with increases for all other parts of the region, notably for Shropshire and Herefordshire.

“We believe that this approach has been motivated more by politics than by sound technical assessment or mineral planning,” said MPA chief executive Nigel Jackson. “The recommendations of the Regional Aggregate Working Party have been rejected but it is not clear why. We believe that the new proposals have the potential to cause shortages of construction materials in the future in some parts of the region.”

The planning system allows for assessments to be made of the ability of each area to meet potential future demands and for that apportionment to be reduced if necessary.
Quarries jump into ponds campaign

THE mineral products industry is wading enthusiastically into a project that aims to reverse the decline in British ponds.

While most countryside ponds are now badly damaged by pollution (notably from farming fertilizers), quarrying is one of the major land-uses with the capacity to create new sites with clean, unpolluted water. The project adds a further strand to the industry’s own campaign to promote and extend the biodiversity potential of its sites. It is already able to show that some 700 UK Sites of Special Scientific Interest originate from quarrying.

The new campaign, part of the national Million Ponds Project, comes from Pond Conservation, a national charity dedicated to protecting freshwater wildlife. Based in Oxfordshire, it has recognised the particular potential for clean water ponds on aggregate sites from initial studies involving restored gravel quarries in the Lower Windrush Valley around Witney.

Of 20 ponds on gravel extraction sites surveyed for wetland plants and invertebrates, all but two were found to be UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Ponds supporting important species. They ranged in size from just a few square metres to long linear ditches dug to monitor ground water, and included temporary ponds that dry up for parts of each year.

The work in the Lower Windrush Valley has received close support from MPA member Smiths Bletchington, which is currently incorporating the pond creation advice into the restoration of recently worked areas of its Gill Mill quarry at Ducklington.

Smiths planning and estates manager Martin Layer believes that ponds will complement the wider restoration scheme. “It is early days but we have created new ponds and scrapes and the early signs are that we are adding biodiversity value quickly and easily,” he said. “We shall certainly be adopting this advice in future nature conservation schemes.”

“We believe we can produce a lasting legacy of pond creation on minerals sites”

The mission now is to spread the word across the industry with the aim of creating up to 200 clean water ponds on aggregate sites by March 2011, around half of which are to be designed for Biodiversity Action Plan species, such as stoneworts, Reed Bunting and Common Toad. The project involves a dedicated minerals project officer within Pond Conservation, Madeleine Ryan, who is funded by Natural England through Defra’s portion of the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF).

“The minerals industry has responded enthusiastically to the project, and several clean water pond creation schemes are now planned at quarry sites in Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire and Cambridgeshire,” says Madeleine. “We believe we can produce a lasting legacy of pond creation on minerals sites.”

Pond Conservation’s pond creation kit for the industry can be downloaded from www.pondconservation.org