

Parish council plans fund to fight mine plan

WOULD-BE Rimington zinc mining firm Auvista Minerals is not the only organisation prepared to spend cash on its venture.

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The village's parish council is too – it is planning to put money in the 1998-9 budget, effectively as a fighting fund in the almost certain event that members will strongly resist any bid to mine.

The Rimington and Middop Parish Council has a solid record of well-organised opposition to threats to the area's well being. It looks certain that members will live up to it on this latest occasion.

"It seems very likely that any planning application will be opposed," says clerk Mr David King.

"When they discussed the issue last month, councillors felt it wise to ensure that money would be available for public meetings, posters and other expenses if needed."

The issue will be top of the agenda at the meeting next month.

But Mr King is keen to

point out that it will be some considerable time before Auvista will be able to decide whether to apply for mining permission or not. He says that the present drilling, scheduled to go on for another week or even longer, is only the first phase of exploration. As we reported last week, company geologist Mr Mark Davey has said it could be years before there is any further work.

Mr King told us: "The veins visible on the surface, or even just below it, cannot give a true picture of what is further down."

Mr Davey has had a meeting with parish council officials and emphasises to everyone that the company would not wish to disrupt the area.

The drilling does not need planning permission –

the only consent the company needed was to draw off water from nearby stream.

Local people believe that the strength of the opposition to even small scale mining would defeat any planning application. But the company might seek to use only a few vehicles and people, the same numbers as a farming operation. Given Government policies to make the best use of natural resources, Auvista might well be confident it could win, subject to stringent conditions.

Certainly it would be unlikely to seek permission for operations on the scale of the 1880s, when there were shafts and drifts. Several hundred tons of barytes was dug out every year and as many as 40 people were employed.