

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SECANIM (J L THOMAS) LIAISON GROUP

Monday 10 November 2014

Present:-

Councillor John Winterbottom
Councillor Margaret Clark
Mr J A Staddon
Nick Parsons
Rob Sargent
Rod Ruffle

Simon Lane, Environmental Health Manager
Alex Bulleid, Environmental Health Technician (AB)
Richard Shears, Environmental Technical Officer
Sarah Selway, Democratic Services Manager (Committees)

7 **ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Councillor Winterbottom was elected as Chair.

8 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Choules and Simon Ruddy – Principal Environmental Health Officer.

9 **NOTES OF MEETING HELD ON 29 APRIL 2014**

The notes of the meeting held on 29 April 2014 were agreed as a correct record.

Councillor Winterbottom stated that it had been a number of years since he last sat on this committee. He asked if it would be possible to obtain details of the investment in the plant, the number and type of incidents and to which part of the plant these incidents had been attributed to over the last five years.

Nick Parsons confirmed he would endeavour to obtain this information in the next couple of weeks.

10 **REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Members noted the revised Terms of Reference and in particular the increase to two local residents from each of the wards of Alphington, Priory and St. Leonard's.

The Chair suggested that Nigel Fitzhugh be approached to represent St. Leonard's Ward. It was acknowledged that there was no resident representative from Priory Ward.

The Terms of Reference were agreed.

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PROCESS UPDATE

Nick Parsons updated Members on production, a review of the previous 12 months, current activities and the initiatives for 2015. A briefing paper is attached to the minutes.

In response to a Member's question, the Environmental Health Technician outlined the process involved when determining how to measure an odour unit.

Nick Parsons clarified that there was a control centre which collected data from the three towers, this data looks at trends and recorded all readings. Councillor Clark was invited to visit the plant for a tour.

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COMPLAINTS RECEIVED SINCE THE LAST MEETING

A further report was circulated which details complaints received since the agenda was dispatched, together with the complaints summary.

There were ten complaints on 9 June 2014. The factory was not processing at the time and the JLT Tower was operating within permitted parameters. Nick Parson had investigated in response to the first complaint and a developing problem with a blocked probe was rectified.

Any complaints received are recorded by both SecAnim and Exeter City Council. Members asked for further analysis of the complaint data over the last 5/10 years and officers undertook to investigate how this could best be achieved.

The complaints were noted.

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ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members discussed the recent article in the Express and Echo and features on the plant on BBC Radio Devon and the BBC West Country News.

Discussion took place with regards to the chemical smells that may emanate from the plant and the difficulty in ensuring that the odour does actually come from the plant and not elsewhere on Marsh Barton.

Officers clarified that vehicles bringing waste to the site are the responsibility of the haulage companies, and that odour from vehicles on the highway is not covered by any Environmental Health legislation. However SecAnim do work with the haulage companies to time deliveries and ensure that vehicles are not kept waiting to access the plant. Lorries also use the most direct route to the site from the A30, and are timed to arrive over night when possible to reduce time spent in queuing traffic.

If residents make a complaint about odour from a vehicle, it is really helpful if they can give a registration number. This means that the factory can look into the specific load carried, and whether any changes could be made in future to minimise its impact.

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DATE OF NEXT MEETING - WEDNESDAY 15 APRIL 2015 AT 2PM

The date of the next meeting was noted.

(The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and closed at 11.30 am)

Chair

Briefing notes for Liaison committee 21/10/14

Production

The volumes of CAT1 raw material continue to remain stable and in line with forecasted tonnages. They are similar to volumes processed in 2013. Reliability of the operation has been high, exceeding a target of <97% 'up time'.

Review of Previous 12 months for New Members

The site was re-branded in March 2013 and the site now operates under the name of SecAnim Ltd.

Sept 2013 saw the installation of a new raw material handling system and the removal of a significant amount of redundant equipment. Further works were carried out during February 2014 adding enhanced drainage and containment. The aesthetic improvement in this area was completed in Sept 2014 with the removal of high level redundant ducting. The Raw material department continues to be subject to an annual painting programme. These changes over the last 18 months have been significant and have simplified site operations. It must be note, through good liaisons with EHO officers, all works were carried out without any detrimental impact to our environmental performance.

11 new screw conveyors were fitted to the pressroom in 2013 adding process reliability and enhanced containment of odourous process fumes.

The capital investment for the Raw Material handling and pressroom works was £750k.

The site has invested Circa £100k in key areas of the effluent treatment plant throughout 2013 and 2014. This has resulted in enhanced effluent treatment and in particular discharge quality to SWW. The effluent treatment plant now has improved reliability and consistency of operation therefore reducing the risk of fugitive emissions that could potentially occur with loss of treatment.

No further investment is planned for 2014

Current activities

The site is currently trialling a VOC/ Ammonia meter which has been fitted to the Small Flakt. Trials are at an early stage but we will be sharing data with EHO.

The site's No2 Boiler is due for its 5 year NDT examination. No2 boiler is the main process boiler and there are implications to site operations. The boiler will be out of operation for 10 days. To minimise operational impact we have targeted the works for Christmas / New Year period and have hired a boiler for the period. Incineration of process gasses will be carried out using the site's standby incinerator. The intention is to process normal levels of Raw Material at Exeter and avoid the environmental impact of moving tonnage away from the site. A full plan for the works and site operation will be in place by mid November and this will be fully discussed with ECC.

Other

The site received 10 odour complaints on the 9th June 2014. On investigation we found that following routine maintenance of the JLT tower that a small amount of 'slime' had blocked the pH probe holder and had created 'false' readings to the chemical controller. Once discovered the problem was rectified and we have subsequently change our maintenance procedures to avoid a repeat.

The operating costs for the odour abatement processes are attached. Historically this information has been supplied to the liaison committee. Jan – Jun will be presented at October meeting and July to Dec at the meeting in April.

2015 Initiatives

- Trial Installation of a VSD to the JLT tower fan to assess the impact of reducing the fan speed at times of 'shutdown' ECC agreed.
- Investigating the installation of a carbon filter system
- Look at methods for building differential pressure monitoring
- National debate and action on Raw Material quality throughout the Rendering industry.

Complaints Received Since Agenda Circulated:

WK/2014005022 10/10/2014 16.10 Rivermead Road C8 Factory complaint – weather clear and mild

Case Comments: Complainant reported that he had just been out for a walk and he felt that the odour was unacceptable. He 'would continue to complain until we close the factory down.'

AB investigated. The factory was not processing at the time of the call, but was starting up. The boiler was firing, but no raw material was being processed. The towers were in normal start-up sequence.

Only very slight odour detected in corner of Belle Isle Park, of treated air.

Called complainant to discuss. No answer, so left message asking him to call me back.

WK/2014005140 16/10/2014 12.30 Magdalen Road C1 Factory complaint – overcast with occasional drizzle

Email: email received:

I work in magdalen road where at the moment there are unpleasant smells in the air. I assumed it was drains on the highway, but I have just spoken (within 10minutes) two different people, both of whom live off Topsham road, who say it is coming from the direction of JL Thomas , one of them came specifically in the hope of seeing me at work to ask if I could report it, and ask how can JL Thomas continually be allowed to create this unpleasant environment ?
Can ECC do anything please ?

Case Comments: RS was downwind of the factory shortly before the complaint was received. He reported that:

RS walked down wind of JLT 11:20-12:20:- clean tower odour picked up in Barnardo Rd, St Leonards Place, Weirfield Rd. Nothing was picked up in Belle Isle or Trews Weir Reach. At 12:00 walking along Topsham Road I did pick up a strong odour for a short duration (5 mins). The odour was a mix of strong tower and a material odour which was not unpleasant but different to what I had detected further up the road.

On return to the office I called Bryan at the factory to ask if they had had anything happen on site at 12:00. He said that he wasn't aware of anything that had happened on site at that time but would look into if they had received any deliveries at that time. The factory was operating without any reported problems.

Case Comments: AB investigated. There was no odour on Magdalen Road. As I got closer to the river, there was an increasing tower smell. This was noticeably chemical in nature, and clean.

On site, the factory was running well. The towers all smelt very good.

WK/2014005141 16/10/2014 13.30 Feltrim Avenue C2 Factory complaint – overcast with occasional drizzle

Case Comments: AB investigated. There was a noticeably chemical, clean tower smell.

On site, the factory was running well. The towers all smelt very good.

WK/2014005301 22/10/2014 18.40 Rivermead Road C9 Factory complaint – weather mild

Case Comments: Complaint made directly to factory out of hours.

The factory was processing at the time, all systems were running well

WK/2014005337 26/10/2014 14.48 Matford Avenue C1 Complainant says he noticed smell from JL Thomas on Matford Avenue and at DCC while on a walk

Case Comments: Call made to Control Centre out of hours. They contacted security at JL Thomas, who confirmed that factory not processing at the time, and no known faults.

AB called factory on Monday, when site had completed full investigation. JLT tower was not running because of maintenance. The LF was running instead.

WK/2014005511 31/10/2014 23.30 Bagshot Avenue C1 Unpleasant odour from factory

Email: Sent: 31 October 2014 23:53
To: Environmental Protection / Environmental Health
Subject: Message generated from 'Report an Environmental Health Issue' form

The following customer has used the Report an Environmental Health Issue form at www.exeter.gov.uk.

This message was originally sent to Environment, Public_health_nuisance at environmental.protection@exeter.gov.uk.

Please respond to the customer by email

Customer Address: - Bagshot Avenue, Exeter, EX2 4RN. [View Map](#)

Report details: -

Offender : - J Thomas factory

Issue type : - Unpleasant Odour

Issue location: -

Issue details : -

Issue time : - 23:30

Issue date : - 31/10/2014

Witness : - yes

Comments: - Arrived home got out of car and we were greeted by the very strong sickening odour yet again. Far too strong to be considered "within an acceptable level". Their process has gone wrong again. Reported to the factory.

Case Comments: The factory was processing, with no problems in the chemical scrubbers. The incinerator was running because of a fault with the NO2 boiler, and the process was running slowly because of this.

WK/2014005517 01/11/2014 11.30 Matford Avenue C3 Factory Complaint

Case Comments: Call made to out of hours service, and passed to factory to investigate.

The factory was processing, with no problems in the chemical scrubbers. The incinerator was running because of a fault with the NO2 boiler, and the process was running slowly because of this.

WK/2014005535 03/11/2014 14.40 Trews Wear Reach C3 Smell been ongoing this morning, unsure of where it is coming from

Phone call received: Call received regarding a smell which was noticed by complainant when she went out this morning, when she came back and the smell was still there. She couldn't explain the smell, she said she thought it may be coming from JLT.

Passed to RS

Case comments: RS investigated

Strong odour in Belle isle when I first got out the car but it was only brief.

I walked up to Trews Wear Reach, where you could pick up a hydrocarbon smell coming from the gasworks demolition site. On the Trews Wear bridge I could pick up the organic smell being generated by the EA flood relief works.

Walking through Bell Isle park I could smell a clean treated air smell. The wind was moving around a bit and there were a lot of different odours in the area.

Whilst walking back to the car a second call came in from Bagshot Ave about the factory. I drove around to the complainant's road and could smell clean treated air.

WK/2014005539 03/11/2014 15.30 Bagshot Avenue C1 Factory Complaint

Phone call received: Call complaining of 'dead animal' smell coming from JLT.

Case Comments: RS investigating earlier complaint when call was received.

Strong odour in Belle isle when I first got out the car but it was only brief.

I walked up to Trews Wear Reach, where you could pick up a hydrocarbon smell coming from the gasworks demolition site. On the Trews Wear bridge I could pick up the organic smell being generated by the EA flood relief works.

Walking through Bell Isle park I could smell a clean treated air smell. The wind was moving around a bit and there were a lot of different odours in the area.

Whilst walking back to the car a second call came in from Bagshot Ave about the factory. I drove around to the complainant's road and could smell clean treated air.

WK/2014005861 07/11/2014 16:42 Rivermead Road C8 Factory Complaint

Case Comments: RS in area during the day before the complaint.

Topsham Road and Rivermead Road area 11:00 - clean treated air odour

RS working at Belle Isle 13:00-16:00, and then walked from Belle Isle Park along to Rivermead Road and Salmonpool Lane. There was a clean tower smell in Rivermead Road.

Wind light SW, overcast with occasional showers.

Case Comments: Call from the complainant at 16:42. He was ringing to complain about the smell from JLT.

He said that he was having a moan about the smell and was wondering if the plant could be moved. I explained that I had been working in the area about an hour ago had could smell a clean treated air odour in Rivermead Road.

I explained that the treatment towers did have a residual chemical odour but this was normal for the type of treatment that they use.

The complainant was happy that he could ring in and complain and would again when he next smelt the factory.

RS then rang factory to inform them of the complaint and our investigations. The factory was running very well with very little stock in. They should be closed down early tomorrow and finish empty.

Complaints summary:

	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Total
2014	4	33 (+1 vehicle)	73	13	122 (+1 vehicle)
2013	3 (+1 noise)	23 (+4 noise)	53 (+2 vehicle)	14	93 (+5 noise and 2 vehicle)
2012	7	39	90	20	156
2011	6	22	42	24	94
2010	4	31 (+ 1 noise)	44 (+ 1 noise)	15 (+1 noise)	94 (+3 noise)
2009	4	21	70	19 (+ 1 noise)	114 (+1 noise)
2008	4	30	108	39	181
2007	17	31	24	10	82
2006	2	35	36	37	110
2005	8	40	54	8	110
2004	13	16	51	2	82
2003	6	21	198	26	251
2002	2	19	8	5	34

Number of complaints received by complainant and road (since last meeting):

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9
Topsham Road	1	1	1	1					
Marsh Green Rd North	6	5	1	1					
Oxford Street	1								
Rivermead Road	1	1	1	9	1	3	1	3	1
Barnardo Road	2	1							
Premier Place	1								
Leighdene Close	1								
Barnfield Hill	3								
Barrack Road	1								
Gras Lawn	1	3	2						
Wonford Road	1	1	1						
Okehampton Road	1								
St Bernards Close	5								
The Quay	1								
Water Lane	1	1	1						
Norwood Avenue	1								
Bagshot Avenue	8								
Willeys Avenue	1								
Feltrim Avenue	1	1							
Canal Banks	1								
Matford Avenue	5	2	2						
Trews Weir Reach	2	1	1						
Jennifer Close	1								
Buckerell Avenue	1	1							
Glenwood Rise	2								
Salmonpool Lane	2	1	1						
Gabriels Wharf	1								
Oxford Street	1								
St Leonards Avenue	1								
Cotfield Street	1								
Southgate	2								
Exe View Cottages	1								
Magdalen Road	1								

Days on which there were more than one complaint:

09/06/2014	10	Factory not processing, and JLT tower operating within permitted parameters. Possibly there was a developing problem with a blocked probe that was rectified by NP during investigation in response to first complaint.
10/06/2014	2	Factory not processing, only slight treated air odour detected by officers
27/06/2014	3	Factory not processing, JLT tower running well.
03/07/2014	3	Factory processing, no problems
07/07/2014	2	Factory not processing, JLT tower running well.
14/07/2014	6	Factory not processing, started up during evening. Possible effluent type smell.
16/07/2014	7	Factory not processing, JLT tower running well.
18/07/2014	6	Factory running well, a clean treated air smell downwind.
24/07/2014	2	Factory not processing, JLT tower running well.
25/07/2014	2	Factory not processing, started up during evening.
31/07/2014	8	Factory running well, a clean treated air smell downwind.
04/08/2014	5	Factory running well, a clean treated air smell downwind
08/08/2014	2	Only very slight, occasional odour detected downwind
09/08/2014	5	Factory processing, no problems
28/08/2014	2	Factory started up at time of second complaint. No process problems.
22/09/2014	3	Factory not processing, JLT tower running well.
01/10/2014	2	Factory processing, no problems
16/10/2014	2	Factory processing, no identified problems although unusual odour noticed downwind in one location
03/11/14	2	Factory was processing, with no problems. During officer investigation odours from other sources were detected (as well as treated air).

Other issues:

Change to wording in permit on second stage free chlorine levels following possible fault on 09 June. Now a target range within which levels should be kept as well as a permitted range.

June 18/19/20 – A series of breakdowns on the night of June 18-19 meant that they had 225T of raw material on the morning of 19 June (which was predicted to be the hottest day of the year). The factory sent off site all raw material which could not be accommodated inside the factory. Only two complaints were received during this time, despite the large volume of raw material, and the poor state of the material.

There was an article in the St Leonards News on 13 July. Several complainants referred directly to this when they called the Council. There have also been several articles in the Express and Echo paper and on the website about odour complaints.