

**EXETER CITY COUNCIL**  
**SOUTH WEST WATER LIAISON GROUP**

Wednesday 8 July 2015

**Present:-**

Councillor Lesley Robson (Chair)

Jay Harris, South West Water  
Tracey Hill, South West Water  
Mary Evans, Residents Representative  
Kevin Bingham, Residents Representative

Simon Ruddy, Principal Environmental Health Officer  
Patrick Nielson, Exeter City Council (Student Placement)  
Jo Quinnell, Assistant Democratic Services Officer (Committees)

10 **ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Councillor Robson was elected as Chair.

11 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Owen, Nigel Thomas-Childs, Ian Ward and Charlotte Quantick.

12 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 MARCH 2015**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2015 were agreed.

13 **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

14 **OPERATIONAL UPDATE**

Jay Harris reported on the following:

- The majority of chains from the sewers had been removed to stop the build up of rag waste. There were three remaining at the junction with Topsham Road where traffic management was required.
- The Persimmon Pump Station had yet to be transferred from the developer to South West Water due to a Land Registry issue. It was anticipated that the hand over would take place before the next meeting, and Jay would advise Environmental Health when this had taken place.
- An investigation had taken place following a complaint of odour from a manhole on the playing field that is on the sewer from Topsham. The cover needs to be replaced as it is not sitting well within the frame, but there were access issues onto the playing field – permission was being sought from Exeter College who own the site.

- A scraper fail had been reported on the day of the last meeting. The tanks were drained on 30/31 March and the repair was completed on 17 April.
- There had been some slippage of the sludge lagoon wall. Although this was a significant operational issue, there were no concerns from an odour perspective. The amount of sludge through the digesters had been reduced, but this can run through the lime plant. Repairs had commenced but there were health and safety issues around accessing an open tank. It was anticipated that the digesters would be fully operational by the end of the following week.
- There had been a failure on scraper tank 3 on 22 May but this was back in operation within a week.
- The grit traps had been cleaned
- Sewer cleaning had taken place for flood defence work
- There had been intermittent control issues for Scraper 2 on 24 June. This had been resolved on the same day, but there had been a risk of odour for approximately two days after completion. It was noted that some complaints had been received the day before the failure.
- There was a control issue on the liming plant on 30 June where raw sludge had been dumped on the concrete outside the barn.
- The aeration tanks had been drained down for planned maintenance which started on 5 July. Following refill, some of the diffusers had risen to the surface and the tank had to be re-drained. It was anticipated that it would be fully operational on 9 July, and noted that this should not cause an odour.
- Skip covers had been installed, as this was causing a slight odour
- The company that supplies the deodorisers had visited the site last week to quote for the provision of more permanent installation around the boundary and where the tankers discharge. The final quotes were awaited.

Jay Harris also reported on planned capital investment.

The sludge reception area would continue to be dosed.

A new coarse screen is to be installed on the 54" inlet sewer. Currently there is no coarse screening on this inlet, only on the 27".

The two grit traps will be refurbished as these can be problematic and the fine inlet screens will also be refurbished as part of the flood defence work.

### **COMPLAINTS**

The complaints report was noted and a list of additional complaints since the agenda was dispatched was circulated and would be attached to the minutes.

There had been an increase in complaints in June, although there were no significant operational issues which contributed to the odours.

Outline planning permission was due to be submitted by Exeter College to build at Countess Wear. However, Jay advised that SWW was likely to submit an objection, not from a capacity issue, but as properties were being built close to the sewage works and the potential for odours. There will also be a requirement to divert a pipe due to restrictions preventing from building over it.

A Supply and Demand Evaluation for Countess Wear was completed in 2012 with a design horizon of 2026. This report recommended that additional treatment capacity would be required on both the waste water and sludge process and this has been delivered.

Jay would check that the sewers had been cleaned in relation to the problems identified by three houses in Lower Wear Road.

The Proactive Team are in place on a trial basis and this will be reviewed after the summer period. The group considered that this had proved very successful, particularly communication to residents.

A discussion was held on the availability of the Proactive Team over weekends and evenings. At present there is no cover, and responses are provided to residents on the next working day.

Jay Harris advised that he would investigate further on how to improve evening and weekend coverage.

Tracey Hill advised that they were looking at holding more community events, possibly over the weekend period to get more resident engagement.

The Proactive Team number is 07779 606026.

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#### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Mary Evans reported on problems of green sludge accumulating on the public right of way in the Newport Park area. She felt it would be useful for a representative from Environment Agency to meet with the complainant. Jay Harris would pass details on to Nigel Thomas-Childs.

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#### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Wednesday 14 October at 2.30pm.

(The meeting commenced at 2.30 pm and closed at 3.10 pm)

Chair

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**South West Water Sewage Treatment Works  
Complaints 27<sup>th</sup> June to 7<sup>th</sup> July**

**WK/201502218**

**29/06/2015      27/06/2015      Wear Barton Road      Sewage odour all day Saturday 27th June from 10:30 onwards. Had to close his windows. Definitely not from the inspection chamber in the field at the rear of his house.**

**Case Actions:**

**WK/201502240**

**30/06/2015      29/06/2015      Newport Road      Recently, sewage odour has been 'bad day & night'. Has noticed in the early hours of the morning, maybe 02.00 or 03.00. Has woken her up. Visitors to house comment on the 'foul odour'.**

**Case Actions:**

E-Mail      Hello Simon  
Thank you for your response.  
Recently the odour has been bad day and night. I haven't logged times as it has been continuous. I will try to do this now.  
I have noticed the smell in the early hours of the morning, maybe 2 or 3 o'clock, it has woken me up. One night I even came downstairs to check that it wasn't my dog with an upset stomach!  
Many visitors to my house have commented on the foul odour, it's embarrassing.  
I will pass on the telephone number of the action group to my neighbours.

----- Original message -----

From: "Ruddy, Simon" <simon.ruddy@exeter.gcsx.gov.uk>  
Date: 29/06/2015 12:44 (GMT+00:00)  
To:  
Subject: UNCLASSIFIED: Sewage odour

CLlr Robson has forwarded your complaint about sewage odour to me. Could you let me know your address and the times that the odour is occurring so that I can log the complaint? I am in regular contact with SWW's Waste Water Operations Manager and can discuss this matter with him directly.

Representatives from Environmental Health and the Environment Agency, together with local Councillors and residents' representatives meet with SWW at a liaison group every 3 months. We discuss operation of the works and the number of complaints received; any information that you can supply is therefore very useful.

SWW has recently set up Proactive Team, based at the works. The team sends out regular updates of any planned works, breakdowns etc. by text. They can also be contacted during office hours and should be able to visit and witness the odour as they are based locally. If you'd like to contact the team and/or be added to their text alert system, their number is 07779606026.

Regards

Simon Ruddy  
Principal Environmental Health Officer  
Exeter City Council  
Civic Centre  
Paris Street  
Exeter  
EX1 1RQ

WK/201502315  
02/07/2015

01/07/2015

Wear Barton Road

Sewage odour detected at Countess Wear School, 09:45 - on & off for a couple of hours.  
Also noticed sudden strong odour at complainant's property at 16:20.

**Case Actions:**

E-Mail

Hello Jay

A complainant's been on the telephone today, reporting odour yesterday (1st July) at Countess Wear School 09:45 - for a couple of hours and at his home - a strong, sudden odour at 16:20.

I've had a couple of other complaints recently

" Newport Park - complainant alleges that, for the last 3 weekends, the odour has been bad from 18:00 onwards but is not a problem Monday to Thursday.

" Newport Road - bad 'day & night'. Noticed in the early hours of the morning, when she alleges that the odour woke her up.

" Wear Barton Road (cul de sac end) - odour all day on Saturday 27th June from 10:30 onwards. Definitely not coming from the inspection chamber in the field.

" Countess Wear Road (Bridge Road end) - complainant has been keeping a log since February. Numerous occasions when the odour comes & goes quickly but lingers in her house. Particularly bad around 07:00 & 19:00.

For the past month:

" Wednesday 3rd June, 07:00 & 19:30

" Monday 15th June 07:00

" Tuesday 23rd June 06:30

" Wednesday 24th June 06:30 to 13:00 (ties in with scraper failure)

Weekends & out of hours odours seem to be a common issue here, so I do think it's worth pursuing how members of the public can contact the works during these times.

Regards

Simon Ruddy  
Principal Environmental Health Officer  
Exeter City Council  
Civic Centre  
Paris Street  
Exeter  
EX1 1RQ

WK/201502372  
06/07/2015

04/07/2015

Ark Royal Avenue

Odour noticeable in Ark Royal Avenue, Saturday 4 July, morning.  
Also detected sewage odour in Glasshouse Lane, 4 July, 08:00.

**Case Actions:**

WK/201502406  
06/07/2015

04/07/2015

Wear Barton Road

Continuous sewage odour all Saturday (4th July) & intermittent on Sunday (5th July).

**Case Actions:**

E-Mail

Hello Jay

I've had a few complaints about sewage odour over the weekend.

Ark Royal Avenue

Saturday 4th July - sewage smell in the morning & also by Glasshouse Lane shops at 08:00

Wear Barton Road (Cul de sac end)

Saturday 4th July - all day

Sunday 5th July - intermittent

Wear Barton Road (Cul de sac end)

Saturday 4th July - 'very unpleasant' at 22:00 (witnessed by Council officer)

Newport Road/Seabrook Avenue

Sunday 5th July - faint but noticeable at 22:00 (witnessed by SR whilst out running)

Wear Barton Road/Glasshouse Lane junction; lower part of Glasshouse Lane

Monday 6th July at 07:40 (witnessed by Lee Staples, on his way to work)

Anything unusual going on over the weekend?

Regards

Simon Ruddy

Principal Environmental Health Officer

Exeter City Council

Civic Centre

Paris Street

Exeter

EX1 1RQ

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