



**Exeter**  
City Council

To the Chair and Members  
of the South West Water Liaison Group

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**Our ref:**

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**AGENDA FOR**  
**SOUTH WEST WATER LIAISON GROUP**

The **South West Water Liaison Group** will meet on **WEDNESDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2015**, commencing at **2.30 pm**, in the SWW Offices, Countess Wear to consider the following business. If you have an enquiry regarding any items on this agenda, please contact Jo Quinnell on **Exeter 265197**.

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## 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.

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## **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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# Agenda Item 5

**Complaint Date**   **Odour Date**   **Address**   **Details**  
**South West Water Sewage Treatment Works**  
**Complaints since the last meeting**

**WK/201502500**  
**13/07/2015**   **11/07/2015**   **Wear Barton Road**   **Complaint about the smell from South West Laboratories.**

**Case Actions:**

Phone call received      Complainant called up in regards to smell from sewage works. He says it started on 11/07/15 at 15:30pm and went on until the evening. On 12/07/15, the smell was intermittent and he couldn't pin down the times exactly.

Case Comments      Visit to plant & drive around Countess Wear with Jay Harris around midday. Called into see complainant. No abnormal odour detected at the time; plant operating normally.

**WK/201502502**  
**13/07/2015**   **09/07/2015**   **Wear Barton Road**   **Complainant called to report the smell from SWW sewage works. He witnessed the smell when he came home today at 11.15am.**

**Case Actions:**

**WK/201502628**  
**17/07/2015**   **16/07/2015**   **Glasshouse Lane**   **Sewage odour every day since returning from holiday on 1 July. Last night - 23.30 - particularly bad.**

**Case Actions:**

Case Comments      Complainant claims that this issue has been going on for years - moved in to house early approx 15 years ago. Thinks that the works needs investment - can the tanks be covered in some way?  
  
Very keen for there to be some kind of on-line reporting system for residents to use (there is such a system on SWW's website).

Case Comments      What happens to complaints? Advised that they are discussed with Jay at the time & analysed at SWW Liaison Group - minutes available on line.  
Visit to plant & drive around Countess Wear (including Glasshouse Lane) with Jay Harris around midday. No abnormal odour detected.

**WK/201502691**  
**21/07/2015**   **21/07/2015**   **Wear Barton Road**   **strong odour today @11.15am. Comp went out at 9.30am, & not bad, but returned and strong odour. Was also strong last night 6pm-11.30pm & occasionally this weekend just gone.**

**Case Actions:**

Case Comments      Tour of site with Jay Harris. Plant operating normally; nothing unusual detected on site.  
  
Called in to see complainant at approx 12.00. No odour that morning.  
  
Complainant texted Proactive Team on a few occasions and hadn't had a response. Jay will check what's happened here.

**WK/201502734**  
**21/07/2015**   **21/07/2015**   **Topsham Road**   **Complaint about the smell coming from South West Water**

**Case Actions:**

Phone call received      Received a complaint about the smell coming from South West Water. He says the smell is encroaching on the golf course.

Case Comments      Visited Persimmon's pumping station with Jay Harris (SWW). No discernible odour in the area. Tour of treatment plant - nothing unusual on site. No abnormal odours detected.

Pumping Station has not yet been adopted by SWW - this is imminent.

Voicemail for complainant to contact me.

Complaint Date	Odour Date	Address	Details
<b>WK/201502738</b>			
21/07/2015	20/07/2015	Lower Wear Road	Odour along Lower Wear Road in the afternoon
<b>Case Actions:</b>			
Case Comments	Jay Harris in Barnstaple today. Not aware of any issues but back on site tomorrow; will check then.		
Case Comments	Visit to plant & drive around Countess Wear with Jay Harris around midday. No abnormal odour detected.		
<b>WK/201502740</b>			
21/07/2015	16/07/2015	Glasshouse Lane	Odour by Glasshouse Lane shops, 10:00.
<b>Case Actions:</b>			
Case Comments	Jay Harris in Barnstaple today. Back on site tomorrow; unaware of any issues but will check.		
Case Comments	Visit to plant & drive around Countess Wear with Jay Harris around midday. No abnormal odour detected.		
<b>WK/201502741</b>			
21/07/2015	21/07/2015	Newport Road	Odour from Rydons Sewers inspection chambers. See email for details.
<b>Case Actions:</b>			
E-Mail	Dear Sir/Madam		
	<p>I am writing in relation to the very strong odour smell in Countess Wear. We seem to have to put up with this on a daily basis, I text the Treatment works on a regular basis in regard to this. This problem has become increasingly worse since the new houses have been built at the Rydons off Topsham Road site. It seems that every time it gets to the over flow height at the pumping station which varies on volume capacity, it discharges to go to the treatment works, the obnoxious odour comes across Topsham Road onto the estate, seemingly coming up through the manholes. The reason I have been told for this at length,(by someone from the Treatment works) is one reason being methane gases builds up in the system. This I understand is one of the reasons why the drains cannot be sealed to prevent any odour coming out. Can you clarify this. I have been invited to visit the Sewerage works to see how this is run, but as I have said to them on numerous occasions all of the odour is not coming from there. Ever since the new drainage system was put in from the Rydons across Topsham Road along Higher Wear Road, Wear Barton Road across the 100 Club fields this has increased from acceptable levels to levels that make you feel physically sick. Meals times are hit and miss depending on whether the odour is present.</p> <p>I feel that complaints are not taken seriously enough and when telephoning everyone is very apologetic but nothing is resolved.</p>		
Case Comments	<p>Visited area with Jay Harris at around 12:00. No odour detected; treatment plan operating normally.</p> <p>The rising main from Topsham runs along Newport Road , in front of the complainant's property. It then cuts across the cul de sac end of Wear Barton Road &amp; across the field to join the syphon under the river.</p> <p>There is a large rectangular inspection chamber on the grassy section near the complainant's house (see attachment) although we couldn't detect any odour here.</p> <p>The Rydons sewer runs down Lower Wear Road &amp; along Wear Barton Road (i.e. not in the vicinity of the complainant's property).</p> <p>Jay will confirm what's below the large inspection chamber (it doesn't seem to tie up with the Topsham sewer line - see attachment).</p>		
<b>WK/201502755</b>			
22/07/2015	21/07/2015	Topsham	Sewerage odours on Topsham Road-See actions for details
<b>Case Actions:</b>			
Case Comments	Was on site at around midday - drove along Topsham Road as far Newport Park; no odour. Visited pumping stations at the Rydons & Newport Park; tour of treatment works with Jay Harris - no odour apparent. Also drove through Countess Wear, stopping at Newport Road & Glasshouse Lane. Again, no odour detected.		



Complaint Date	Odour Date	Address	Details
			Voicemail for complainant to contact me.
Case Comments			Complainant noticed odour at around 14:00 near Plants Galore. Had disappeared from car by the motorway bridge.
Phone call received			We received another complaint of odour - from the Golf & Country Club - at 16:00 that day. MOP called to report that there is a terrible sewerage smell along Topsham Road particularly bad between Seabrook Nurseries and The Rydons, came in through her car air con today!
<b>WK/201502770</b>			
<b>23/07/2015</b>	<b>23/07/2015</b>	<b>Lower Wear Road</b>	<b>Odour from the sewage works.</b>
<b>Case Actions:</b>			
Phone call received			Received a call from the complainant in regards to the smell from the sewage works. He said it's been going on for about a couple weeks, on and off, and it's been a constant problem since he's lived there. He said it was pretty bad this morning (23/07/2015) which prompted his call in to us.
<b>WK/201502776</b>			
<b>23/07/2015</b>	<b>23/07/2015</b>	<b>Glasshouse Lane</b>	<b>smell from the sewage works.</b>
<b>Case Actions:</b>			
Phone call received			The smell has been impeding his house since 19/07/2015 but this is an ongoing issue for years, with the sewage works. He has been in contact with them but told me that they said they couldn't smell it so they didn't think there was a problem. Lately, he has had to have all the windows closed, they can't enjoy their back garden, cannot plan BBQs, etc. as they don't know if it's going to smell on the day. Very unhappy man and would like to know what we are going to do about it.
Case Comments			Telephone call to complainant. Odour often occurs at night/evening & comes down his chimney. All but given up trying to use garden.
			Calls Proactive Team but is told that there is no odour on site.
			Thinks that residents have become apathetic & don't call to complain any more.
			Concern about ability of plant to cope with new housing developments.
			Explained role of liaison group; that out of hours/weekend contact for Proactive Team is being discussed.
			Asked to call so we can log future complaints.
<b>WK/201502788</b>			
<b>24/07/2015</b>	<b>24/07/2015</b>	<b>Wear Barton Road</b>	<b>Complaint about sewage works on 23/07/2015</b>
<b>Case Actions:</b>			
Phone call received			Received call from Mr complaining about the sewer smell yesterday 23/07/2015. He said it started around 2pm and the smell went away around 4:30pm. He has not been outside yet today, so does not know if it's still around.
<b>WK/201502817</b>			
<b>24/07/2015</b>	<b>24/07/2015</b>	<b>Brownleas</b>	<b>Complainant lives at Brownleas Exminster and works at an office at Exeter Golf &amp; Country Club. He has noticed the sewage odour on his way to work (via Glasshouse Lane), whilst at work, and now he has noticed it in Exminster.</b>
<b>Case Actions:</b>			
Case Comments			Explained the complaint history and how we monitor and log complaints. Also discussed previous pumping station issue at The Rydons (several complainants have mentioned Topsham Road this week- resumption of previous pumping station problems?). He is happy for us to pass this on to SWW. No call back required.
<b>WK/201503015</b>			
<b>03/08/2015</b>	<b>03/08/2015</b>	<b>Wear Barton Road</b>	<b>Complainant called today the smell of the from the Countess Wear Sewage Works.</b>
<b>Case Actions:</b>			

<b>Complaint Date</b>	<b>Odour Date</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Details</b>
			Phone call received Phone call from complainant regarding the smell from the sewage works at Countess Wear. It was bad on Saturday, ok on Sunday but today has got worse as the day has progressed. Weather is sunny spells with a light wind.
<b>WK/201503046</b>			
<b>04/08/2015</b>	<b>04/08/2015</b>	<b>Topsham</b>	<b>Strong sewage odour noticed whilst waiting at the traffic lights, junction of Admiral Way &amp; Topsham Road, midday today.</b>
<b>Case Actions:</b>			
Case Comments	Sewage odour apparent during my visit to Wear Barton Road/Newport Road area - Ian Ward says SWW are draining PST in preparation for repair to scraper.		
<b>WK/201503049</b>			
<b>04/08/2015</b>	<b>04/08/2015</b>	<b>Wear Barton Road</b>	<b>Sewage odour all day 3 August, all night 3/4 August &amp; morning of 4 August.</b>
<b>Case Actions:</b>			
Case Comments	At Wear Barton Road approx 15:00. Strong odour of sewage noticeable in Newport Road and at the cul de sac end of Wear Barton Road.  Spoke to complainant - sewage odour was noticeable in his living room.  Spoke to Ian Ward - nothing untoward on site - starting to drain PST2 in preparation for scraper repair.  Called proactive team - Tracey came out & agreed that the odour was from the works; she would see whether it was possible to adjust the deodorisers on site so that the odour was masked better; she would stay in contact with complainant to see whether this was effective.		
<b>WK/201503051</b>			
<b>04/08/2015</b>	<b>04/08/2015</b>	<b>Newport Road</b>	<b>Sewage odour over the weekend (1-2 August) &amp; today (4 August). Proactive team message to say that scraper has broken; concern over ability of existing equipment to cope.</b>
<b>Case Actions:</b>			
<b>WK/201505130</b>			
<b>08/09/2015</b>	<b>08/09/2015</b>	<b>Lower Wear Road</b>	<b>Sewage odour noted near Countess Wear School, Lower Wear Road, at 15.30.</b>
<b>Case Actions:</b>			
E-Mail	Email to Jay Harris  Lesley Robson contacted me yesterday to pass on a complaint from a resident on Lower Wear Road (near the school, apparently) about an odour on Tuesday 8 September, 15:30. No complaints from residents have been made directly to us.		
<b>WK/201505431</b>			
<b>21/09/2015</b>	<b>21/09/2015</b>	<b>Wear Barton Road</b>	<b>Sewage odour over weekend</b>
<b>Case Actions:</b>			
Case Comments	Spoke to the complainant. Odour was noticeable Sunday 20 September, 22.30 onwards. Cannot have windows open at night; has to burn scented candles in the house.  Odour also bad today (Monday 21 September); noticeable around school.  Concerned over the proposed development of the Sheep Field - more sewage going to site; more complaints; also, there's a large sewer from Rydons running across the field; can this be built over?  SWW have commented on planning application:  I refer to the above application and would advise that South West Water policy is to not support developments should the associated housing be located any closer to a public sewage treatment works than existing properties.		

Complaint Date	Odour Date	Address	Details
			The master plan layout as submitted for this development meets this requirement and therefore South West Water has no objection.
			Complainant doesn't understand this because development on the field will create properties closer to the works than existing houses.
			Spoke to Jay Harris. Not aware of any issues on site. Will ask Charlotte from Proactive Team to pay a visit to the area.
			Will also have a word with SWW's Development Coordinator about comments on proposed housing.
			SR visited around midday. Squally showers. No odour evident (Glasshouse Lane, Wear Barton Road, Higher Wear Road, Lower Wear Road).
Phone call received			very bad smell from Sewage works - particularly bad on Sunday evening and very bad this morning

**WK/201505437**

**21/09/2015      21/09/2015      Glasshouse Lane      Strong smell over the weekend.**

**Case Actions:**

Case Comments      Telephone call to Jay Harris (following earlier complaint the same day). Not aware of any issues on site; will ask Charlotte from Proactive Team to assess.

SR visited around midday. Squally showers. No odour evident (Glasshouse Lane, Wear Barton Road, Higher Wear Road, Lower Wear Road).

Phone call received      Received a call from the complainant in regards to smell from South West Water. He said he'd been away for three weeks and came back on Saturday (19/09/2015), and noticed the smell when he was out working in his garden. He said it's still lingering today.

**WK/201505465**

**22/09/2015      22/09/2015      Topsham Road      Odour from sewerage works.**

**Case Actions:**

Phone call received      The odour has been smelt all morning from 8.30 am.

Case Comments      Telephone call to complainant. No response.

(NB - Jay Harris, SWW, called to say that the cable to scraper on PST 3 has snapped. Tank needs to be drained so that repair can be undertaken on Thursday.)

**WK/201505478**

**22/09/2015      21/09/2015      Lower Wear Road      Odour in Lower Wear Road area, lunchtime 21/9/15.  
SR visited area around 12.45; no odour present. Breezy; squally showers.**

**Case Actions:**

**WK/201505521**

**23/09/2015      20/09/2015      Wear Barton Road      Odour all night on Sunday. Gets into property.  
Also notices a high pitched whining noise - morning/lunchtime today (23 September) - thinks it's from the machine needed to stir up the sewage after PST scraper failure.**

**Case Actions:**

**WK/201506434**

**26/10/2015      23/10/2015      Glasshouse Lane      Ongoing smell**

**Case Actions:**

Phone call received      Call received regarding ongoing unpleasant smell. Complainant just wanted to log it and explained it has been ongoing from about 10 in the morning, there was also particularly bad smell on the 14th October 9pm.

<b>Complaint Date</b>	<b>Odour Date</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Details</b>
E-Mail		Hello Jay	

We've received a complaint about odour on Friday 23 October (10.00 onwards) from a Glasshouse Lane resident (lives near the field). The same complainant said there was a similar issue on Wednesday 14th October at 21:00.

Anything unusual at the works during these periods?

**Addendum – Complaints received since report produced:**

<b>6/11/2015</b>	<b>Wear Barton Road Fishy Smell (complainant assumes door to liming plant open)</b>
<b>7/11/2015</b>	<b>Wear Barton Road Odour around 14:00</b>
<b>9/11/2015</b>	<b>Wear Barton Road Odour at 10:00 &amp; noticed again upon return home at 14:50</b>
<b>10/11/2015</b>	<b>Wear Barton Road Odour at 09:30</b>