

EXETER CITY COUNCIL
SOUTH WEST WATER LIAISON GROUP

Wednesday 13 November 2013

Present:-

Councillor Lesley Robson
Councillor Keith Owen
Councillor Rob Newby

Jay Harris, South West Water
Jack Board, South West Water
Ian Ward, South West Water
Gail Crocker, South West Water
Mary Evans, Residents Representative
Kevin Bingham, Residents Representative
Simon Ruddy, Exeter City Council
Simon Lane, Exeter City Council
Jo Quinnell, Exeter City Council

8 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 JULY 2013**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2013 were agreed.

9 **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

10 **OPERATIONAL UPDATE**

Jay Harris reported that the backlog of sludge reported at the last meeting had been cleared and the temporary equipment had been taken off site approximately a month ago. It was expected that there had been an improvement in odours since the summer.

A public meeting had taken place, where a debate was held about the Pumping Station for the Persimmon development. Some of the odours are generated from the new sewer that runs along Lower Wear Road.

A customer caravan had been in place for two days in the area and had taken names and addresses of customers in order to plot a map of where odours were found. The map was circulated for information. Approximately 30 people attended which was very positive.

There is currently an issue with an occasional odour coming from manhole covers which are linked to the pumping station on the housing development taking place at the former Royal Naval Store Depot site. A meeting took place yesterday with Persimmon but SWW were not informed until that day. Advice and assistance had been offered to Persimmon from SWW but no contact had been received. Exeter City Council had also tried to contact the company. Further attempts to arrange a meeting would take place before the next liaison group meeting in February.

The Group noted that Ben Bradshaw, MP would be visiting the Works between January and March 2014.

An offer of £5,000 compensation had been made to residents by SWW to provide some benefit to those affected by the odours over the summer. The Wear United Group will manage the funds and ideas of how the money can be spent will be pooled together for consideration and a decision.

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COMPLAINTS

Two additional complaints had been received on 12 November, which was from a resident who had attended the customer caravan event and had filled in an entry in the odour diary.

On this occasion, jetting was taking place at the pumping station which would have released odours. The odour from the sewers would be more localised, but dispersed more from the SWW site.

It was suggested that as the development was not fully completed, the pumping station was not taking the flows it was designed for.

Reference was made to odours in the Lower Wear Road area and SWW would look into this.

The Residents Representative advised of a fish-type smell on 14 and 15 October. He was advised to contact SWW as soon as this odour is present again.

SWW advised that they have been looking into the best way to collate information and complaints and the new case management system would assist this. Lessons had been learnt over the summer with regards communications and the length of time to resolve issues. Their aim was to be open and transparent and to reassure and advise of any ongoing problems earlier.

A number of ways to communicate problems were being explored, such as text alerts, smart phone apps, the internet, phone call to ECC and noticeboards.

If a problem has been identified which will last for no longer than 24 hours, SWW will phone ECC to ensure they can manage any complaints calls. Any longer than this, SWW would endeavour to get the message out as widely as possible, including the local school.

It was also suggested that information could be posted on the ECC website and notices in the Customer Service Centre.

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ANY OTHER BUSINESS

SWW advised of works to be undertaken during the week beginning 25 November in order to make connections into the new sludge plant. These works have the potential for noise disturbance.

Works would start at 5am over a two-hour period as this was the point of the lowest flow and lowest risk as there is more chance of odours.

It was suggested that due to the early hours of the planned works, some form of shield could be used such as bales of straw. SWW would liaise with ECC regarding the conditions of operation, and information would be posted on the website.

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DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was arranged for Wednesday 12 February at 2.30pm at the South West Water Offices, Countess Wear.

A meeting would be convened earlier than this date if necessary.

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TOUR OF THE WORKS

A tour of the works took place immediately after the meeting.

(The meeting commenced at 2.30 pm and closed at 3.32 pm)

Chair