



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

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Our ref:
Your ref:

AGENDA FOR SOUTH WEST WATER LIAISON GROUP

The **South West Water Liaison Group** will meet on **WEDNESDAY 18 MARCH 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

Thursday 4 December 2014

Present:-

Councillor Lesley Robson (Chair)
Councillor Keith Owen

Jay Harris, South West Water
Mary Evans, Residents Representative
Nigel Thomas-Childs, Environment Agency
Simon Ruddy, Exeter City Council
Jo Quinnell – Exeter City Council

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APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Kevin Bingham, Simon Lane and Councillor Newby.

10

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 JULY 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2014 were agreed.

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TERMS OF REFERENCE

The revised Terms of Reference were circulated, which now ensured that representatives from the Environment Agency were included.

The Group agreed the new Terms of Reference.

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MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

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OPERATIONAL UPDATE

Jay Harris reported that there had been a scraper failure on tank no. 1 on 17 September. It had been fully operational since 7 November.

On 17 November work had started on site to clean the second digester. This had the highest risk of odour when draining. These works had been finalised last week.

The second digester was now empty and scaffold would be erected to ensure it is structurally sound. The sludge processing capability through digestion was now reduced as a result of this.

Photographs of the sewers in Admiral Way were circulated. These were relatively new sewers and showed the build up of rag waste caught across the chains. Gas detectors were also set off when the manhole covers were opened which indicates an odour. The chains were installed across manholes for protection, but due to safety measures now in place, these were no longer required and could potentially be removed as they no longer serve a purpose.

The industry is putting some pressure on the use of 'flushable' wipes, and SWW were looking at a long term strategy on the impact of wipes etc that are perceived to be flushable by the general public. They are looking at pilot areas to engage with communities on the issue.

Jay Harris reported on the communications plan. Service representatives had been newly appointed to SWW. Although they would be based at Countess Wear, they would cover a wider area.

Their main role would be the management of customers, and they would be undertaking a door-to-door campaign today asking customers if they wished to sign up for text alerts. Jay advised that they would liaise closely with the new team to keep them informed of any works taking place to try to be more pro-active with residents.

Any incoming contacts to the system regarding odours would be monitored. If a complaint is received, a text can then be sent out to customers advising that an investigation is taking place as they will have the capacity to do so.

The cases can be filtered down by postcode and the type of contact, eg odour.

One of the service representatives would be invited to the next meeting to discuss in more detail.

Reference was made to odours in Lower Wear Road. Jay advised that technicians would be carrying out a CCTV survey to try to identify the issues in that area.

The draft report from the Odour Survey carried out by Cornwall College had been received. This covered the period from April to September. Cornwall would be visiting again next week to do the final download of data as the timeframe had been extended to December.

Jay Harris would review the draft report, and suggested that Cornwall College be invited to the next meeting to discuss the findings.

Two more operators had recently been introduced on site, bringing the total to five. This would ensure that sufficient routine maintenance takes place.

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COMPLAINTS

Residents who had submitted complaints in the past had been invited to a tour of the Works on 2 September. Four residents attended.

It was interesting to note that those attending did not associate the background odour to that experienced in their homes. A tanker discharge was taking place at the time, and this seemed to be the closest odour.

It was anticipated that a further tour would take place in the New Year, and SWW were keen to add these as regular events.

The cleaning of the storm tanks is a manual process at present, but SWW were looking at introducing an automated process where they could set the operation to take place during the night to reduce the opportunity for odours.

85 complaints had been received to date this year compared to 113 last year. The increase in October was attributed to the problems with the scraper. 59% of

complaints had been from six residents, and the highest volume of complaints were in the area of Wear Barton Road.

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ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Topsham Recreation Ground

It was reported at the last meeting that a section of the burst pipe at the Topsham Recreation Ground had been sent away for analysis. Jay Harris advised that he had not yet received the results, but would pass these on when available.

Topsham Footpath

Mary Evans referred to the green sludge accumulating on the public right of way at Topsham. When the tide recedes it is leaving the green sludge and the public are climbing the wall to avoid the public path. A sample was taken by a resident, and Jay Harris would check whether SWW had received this.

Nigel Thomas-Childs advised that the Environment Agency hotline should be called when the sludge is present as it was likely to be some form of algae. An officer can collect a sample and investigate in the laboratory. The number is 0800 807060.

Scrapers

Jay Harris reported on systems telemetry installed which would ensure that if there is a fail, the process stops. Jay was also asked if he could also provide flow data, which would be useful as complaints are received during the night and analysis could be undertaken to see how this ties in.

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DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Wednesday 18 March at 2.30pm.

(The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and closed at 10.50 am)

Chair

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Complaint Date	Odour Date	Address	Details
WK/201406549 09/12/2014	09/12/2014	Newport Road	Sewage smell (smell also bad last Saturday 6th Dec). Complainant unsure if smell is from Persimmon or SWW sewage works. RS advised he would visit to investigate.

Case Actions:

E-Mail
From: Staples, Lee
Sent: 09 December 2014 11:47
To: 'Harris, Jay'
Subject: UNCLASSIFIED: Odour Complaint

Hi Jay,
We have received a complaint today from a resident of Newport Park regarding a sewage odour (complainant was unsure if this was from SWW or the Persimmon site). He also stated that the odour was bad last Saturday (6th Dec). One of my colleagues is popping out for a sniff, but please could you have a look around the sewage works and let me know if there are any issues.

Thanks

Lee Staples
Environmental Health Officer
Exeter City Council

Case Comments
Call received from Jay Harris. Has dispatched team member to check around the site, and they will also walk around housing estate (new procedure being trialled since last liaison meeting last week). Jay will feedback. He is not aware of any issues at this stage.

E-Mail
From: Staples, Lee
Sent: 09 December 2014 15:45
To: 'Harris, Jay'
Subject: UNCLASSIFIED: RE: Odour Complaint

Hi Jay,
My colleague said that there was no discernible odour at the time he visited (approx mid day). The complainant did say that he thought the odour might be more from the Persimmon side, so your/ our assessment would accord with that. Thanks for getting this looked into.

Regards

Lee Staples
Environmental Health Officer
Exeter City Council

EPSU Officer Visit
RS on site and walked around Newport park, lots of smells in the area nothing that I would say was sewage. There was a bonfire which was burning wood and a few plastic bits that I requested that they stop burning the plastics. Wind very light NW

Reallocation of worksheet
Passed from officer: LS - Lee Staples to officer: SR - Simon Ruddy

reallocated

Case Comments
Cycled along Topsham Road, Wear Barton Road, & Higher Wear Road at approx 7.50am. No odour from sewage works or Persimmon site noticed.

WK/201406576 10/12/2014	07/12/2014	Wear Barton Road	Odour complaint about the sewage works
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Case Actions:

Case Comments
Call about the smell over the last few days
Complainant said that the smell Sunday evening 18:30 and again last night 19:30 was bad.
Happy to just report it today, it is not an issue at the moment but he will call back in if it comes back.

Reallocation of worksheet
Passed from officer: RS - Richard Shears to officer: SR - Simon Ruddy

Complaint Date	Odour Date	Address	Details
WK/201406828			
23/12/2014	23/12/2014	Wear Barton Road	Odour today (23 Dec) at 12.30, Friday (19 Dec) at 17.30, Thursday (18 Dec) at 18.15 and Wednesday (17 Dec) at 10.15 (in this case, noted by Glasshouse Lane shops)

Case Actions:

Case Comments

Spoke to Jay Harris

Storm tank cleaning today. SWW has sent out text alert but Complainant was missed! The Community Services Team will make contact with him.

Jay can't explain odour at other times.

WK/201406898			
05/01/2015	05/01/2015	Newport Road	Odour for several days before, and on, Christmas day.

Case Actions:

Complaint Date	Odour Date	Address	Details
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E-Mail Good evening Mr Ruddy

I was going to wait until Monday to email you once again regarding odour smells, but as we have had to put up with this since before, on Christmas day, and on several consecutive days I felt enough was enough. Can you please explain what problem/excuse is causing the problem this time. As you will appreciate to have the smell on Christmas day, (it was a good job that we were going to family for Christmas day) was unacceptable. I did feel for the families that did stay at home. I hope that their Windows were good to keep out the smell.

We did take part in the Odour survey with South West Water and Cornwall College but we were told that the report would be going back to South West Water.

South West Water say that they are addressing the problem, but the Odour that we are experiencing, this does not seem to be the case. We feel that this problem will only get worse, due to the number of houses being built, as they cannot seem to control this now, having one problem after another. As I am writing this I have once again made sure the bedroom windows are shut tight, but as I am sure you will appreciate it would be nice to be able to leave them slightly ajar.

We feel that we are always being given one excuse after the other but getting no farther forward as to curing the problem.

Awaiting to hear from you to shed any light on this problem.

Case Comments Spoke to Jay Harris; not aware of any issues over Christmas, except sludge spill on December 30th. Will make some enquiries and get back to me.

E-Mail Email - Cllr Robson to Complainant

Dear

I agree: the situation is still bad. Along with the other Priory Councillors a meeting was held with Ben Bradshaw and senior SWW officials at the end of December. SWW had just received the Report from Cornwall College: they promised to forward it, but this has not yet happened. I will chase them if it is not done by the end of the week. I would like to see it!

SWW are in the process of clearing up various issues. They are cleaning and clearing some of the sewage pipes, one of which is close to your house. I think we will have to wait and see if this brings any improvement.

Would you like me to forward your email to the relevant SWW officials? It is a very good letter!

Complaint Date	Odour Date	Address	Details
			<p>Meeting on site with Cllr Robson, Jay Harris, Tracy & Charlotte from Proactive Team.</p> <p>Cornwall College odour monitoring report (April to September) discussed - Jay will forward copies for study. One area of site identified with higher ammonia levels was the digested sludge lagoon (sludge has to spend a number of days here after digestion before being turned into cake - however, it's digested and shouldn't be odorous).</p> <p>Discussed site capacity with Jay - a common query from complainants is the ability of the site to cope with new development. Jay will put a statement together to explain this.</p> <p>Proactive Team have a number of complainants' telephone numbers and are text messaging when any work is planned with the potential to release odour; they are encouraging more people to sign up to this scheme - intend to letter drop Countess Wear, attend the next coffee morning, looking at pop-up gazebo on the estate etc. Keen to have another open day.</p> <p>Proactive Team are based at Countess Wear - can respond to odour complaints (during office hours) & will visit complainants if they call.</p> <p>Walked around site. Appeared to be operating normally; no particularly odorous activities noted (no odour by digested sludge lagoon). Occasional, very transient odours as we walked around but couldn't pin down to any particular area/activity.</p> <p>Tanker discharge pipe (into twin syphon) terminates above the sewage level - discussion as to whether it could be extended so that discharge is always below the sewage level; Jay will look into this.</p>

WK/201406899
05/01/2015 **05/01/2015** **Topsham Road** **Odour today (Monday 5 January) 09.30 onwards & yesterday afternoon.**

Case Actions:

Case Comments	Complainant alleges issue has been ongoing for around 10 years. Has concerns over capacity of works to cope with demand from new housing developments. Claims odour seeps into her property.
EPSU Officer Visit	Visited area. No odour apparent along Topsham Road (complainant lives near Countess Wear Roundabout). No odour apparent along Glasshouse, Wear Barton Road or Higher Wear Road.
Case Comments	Spoke to Jay Harris; not aware of any issues over Christmas, except sludge spill on December 30th. Will make some enquiries and get back to me.
Case Comments	Monitoring approx 15.00. No odour apparent. Weather overcast, breezy, drizzly.

WK/201406908
05/01/2015 **05/01/2015** **Wear Barton Road** **Odour on Mon 29 Dec (16:30), Tue 30 Dec (19:15), Wed 31 Dec (18:00) & Thur 1 Jan (10:00), when it was particularly bad. Also noticed odour at Countess Wear roundabout today (Mon 5 Jan) at 10:40.**

Case Actions:

Case Comments	Have already taken another complaint about odour near Countess Wear roundabout at a similar time today. Jay Harris unaware of any issues (although there was a spillage on site on 30 December).
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WK/201406968
07/01/2015 **06/01/2015** **Newport Road** **Odour, evening of 6/1/15. See email**

Case Actions:

E-Mail	Good evening Mr Ruddy
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Just a quick follow on to my previous email. On arriving home from work tonight I was once again greeted by a foul smell. How to enjoy our evening meal? This really needs to be sorted now, no more excuses.

E-Mail	Dear
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Thank you for your email. I have spoken to South West Water's Waste Water Operations Manager who advises that the works is currently processing an increased volume of sludge from other sites and this may be responsible for the odour. I monitored the Countess Wear area on Monday morning and this afternoon but there was no odour apparent at these times.

I understand that SWW has now contacted you directly about this matter.

Regards

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

Case Comments	Monitoring, approx 15.00. Weather overcast, breezy, drizzle. No odour apparent on Newport Road.
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Case Comments	Spoke to Jay Harris. Works are currently processing sludge from other sewage works due to issues at Crediton & Axminster.
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SWW's Proactive Team has contacted the complainant; there is also a text alert along these lines.

E-Mail	Dear Mr Ruddy
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Many thanks for your reply. Once again South West Water come up with the same excuses, this is getting to be rather repetitive. Yes South West Water have contacted me and I now have a direct telephone number to contact them.

You mention that you monitored the area on Monday but as you will appreciate the smell does not have a set time and day to appear. If as South West Water say it happens when there is an increased volume of sludge from other sites, perhaps if they were to contact you when this happens you would then be able to experience what a lot of us have to, the awful smell, which if you bring lunch with you, you will appreciate the loss of appetite.

I think nothing will change until the resolution of the new site, The Rydons, have sorted out the problems with the sewerage system.

WK/201407009

09/01/2015

07/01/2015

Wear Barton Road

Odour at 17:40. Odours seem to be in the evening.

Case Actions:

Case Comments	Has received text alert to say that, due to seasonal demand, works are currently treating high volume of sewage from other works. But why is the odour in the evening?
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And, if the works are processing a higher amount of sewage now, how will they cope with extra demand from new properties under construction?

Complaint Date	Odour Date	Address	Details
WK/201407050 13/01/2015	12/01/2015	Wear Barton Road	Odour at 10.15 & 13.00.
Case Actions:			
Case Comments	Rang Jay to advise him of the complaint. He's unaware of any problems on site and was in the office all morning. He is going to check whether they've had any issues. He asked who the complainant was so I advised him it was Wear Barton Rd. He says that they've starting to text people to make them aware of any issues. He says he will discuss at the meeting tomorrow with SR and Cllr Robson.		
WK/201407406 28/01/2015	25/01/2015	Wear Barton Road	Odour (intermittent) on Sunday 25 January, midday & night time.
Case Actions:			
Case Comments	Spoke to Jay Harris. Will investigate & report back.		
WK/201407409 28/01/2015	28/01/2015	Wear Barton Road	Odour on Tuesday 27th January at 19.00; also noticed at 23.30.
Case Actions:			
Case Comments	Spoke to Jay Harris. Will investigate & report back.		
WK/201407819 10/02/2015	09/02/2015	Newport Road	Complaining that smell from sewerage works is particularly bad this evening.
Case Actions:			
Case Comments	Message on Jay Harris' Voicemail to call me. There was a text message from the Proactive Team, 9 & 10 February - Urgent Work with risk of odour release.		
Reallocation of worksheet	Passed from officer: SSH - St Stephens House to officer: SR - Simon Ruddy		
Case Comments	Telephone call from Jay Harris.		
	One of final tanks' scrapers worked themselves loose. Tank has been drained; should be repaired by 12 February. Bit of a problem balancing the system as currently only have 3 final tanks - may be causing an odour issue.		
	Proactive Team have text messaged 9 & 10 February; Jay says that this complainant has also been contacted.		
WK/201407959 16/02/2015	09/02/2015	Lakeside Avenue	Very strong smell of sewage, particularly around Glasshouse Lane.
Case Actions:			

Complaint Date	Odour Date	Address	Details
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Case Comments Jay Harris advises that a couple of the scrapers to one of the final settlement tanks have come loose. The tank has to be drained & the system balanced.

E-Mail
 From:
 Sent: 09 February 2015 19:03
 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 Name: -
 Customer Address: - Lakeside Avenue, Exeter
 Customer Phone: -
 Email Address: -

Email Address: -

Report details: -
 Offender : - Probably South West Water
 Issue type : - Unpleasant Odour
 Issue location: - Lakeside Avenue/Glasshouse Lane
 Issue details : - very bad smell of sewage tonight
 Issue time : - 18:30
 Issue date : - 09/02/2015
 Witness : - yes
 Comments: - Very bad smell of sewage I suspect from the Countess Wear sewerage works, particularly strong around Glasshouse Lane

E-Mail Dear

Thank you for your email regarding sewage odour on the evening of 9 February. I've spoken to South West Water's Waste Water Services Manager who advises that the odour was due to work on a settlement tank, which has now been refilled.

SWW has recently set up a Proactive Team, based at the Countess Wear works, to deal with odour complaints. The team is using a text messaging service to advise of any works on site with the potential for odour release. If you'd like to be added to their text alert scheme, the team can be contacted on:

Regards

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

WK/201407961

16/02/2015 09/02/2015

Case Actions:

Very bad odour - the worst that the complaint has smelled for some time. Could smell it at Mount Wear Square, Lakeside Avenue, Newport Road & Wear Barton Road at 20:45.

Case Comments	Jay Harris advises that a couple of the scrapers to one of the final settlement tanks have come loose. The tank has to be drained & the system balanced.
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E-Mail	From: Sent: 09 February 2015 21:18 To: ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH Cc: Subject:
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I am writing to complain about the smell in Countess Wear last night. It was very bad, the worse I have smelt in some time. I was able to smell it in Mount Wear Square, Lakeside Ave, Newport Road and Wear Barton Road, at about 20:45. I have been told it had been smelling for some time.

E-Mail	Dear
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Thank you for your email regarding sewage odour on the evening of 9 February. I've spoken to South West Water's Waste Water Services Manager who advises that the odour was due to work on a settlement tank, which has now been refilled.

SWW has recently set up a Proactive Team, based at the Countess Wear works, to deal with odour complaints. The team is using a text messaging service to advise of any works on site with the potential for odour release. If you'd like to be added to their text alert scheme, the team can be contacted on:

Regards

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