

Notes of the public meeting with Anglian Water held in Fairfield Community Hall on Thursday 6th July 2017 at 7:30 pm

Councillors present: C Bidwell (Chairman) B E Dack, P Daffarn, S Foster, N P Hanks, S L Jones and T Milliken

Officer present: Katrina Henshaw (Parish Clerk)

CBC present: Ward Member Councillor S Dixon
Guy Quint – Principal Officer (Pollution & Licensing)
Jane Mann – Environmental Services Officer

Anglian present: Christopher Hayton – Public Affairs Manager
Tim Blackmore – Regional Treatment Manager
Neil Chamberlain – Treatment Manager
Sarah Beattie – Customer Liaison Manager
Omid Shafibeik – Senior Odour Modeller
James Wickens – Project Engineer
Jacob Wallace – Public Affairs Executive
Steve Peirson – Independent Odour Specialist

Also present: Fifty-seven members of the public

1 Introduction from FPC Chairman

1.1 Councillor Bidwell read the following

Good evening and welcome to tonight's Parish Council meeting, which will be in two parts.

Firstly, we shall be hearing from Anglian Water representatives, who will be presenting their plans to meet the abatement notice, and answering questions from residents.

After the Anglian Water presentation there will be a ten minute break to allow residents to look at the plans on display. I shall then proceed with the monthly Parish Council meeting.

Before handing over to Anglian Water, I wish to bring you all up to-date. Our MP Alistair Burt has been fully aware of the fail odour problems residents suffered during the May bank holidays and the subsequent weeks.

Around two weeks ago Councillor Steve Dixon and I had a conference telephone conversation with Alistair where we provided him with our views and concerns.

Following that conference call, Alistair contacted Peter Simpson CEO of Anglian Water, where Alistair presented him with the views of residents and CBC he then asked Peter to attend the Letchworth Site, which he agreed to do on the following Monday morning. He met representatives from Fairfield and CBC. At this meeting I informed him of the concerns of Fairfield residents.

Councillor Dixon raised the concerns from CBC regarding times scales and AW press release.

Peter then made a statement that he was on site to ensure the problem was being dealt with fully. Funding was not an issue, and they had enough staff and equipment available to ensure the problem would be dealt with as quickly as possible.

Since the meeting several actions on site have taken place, one was to fully cover the 3 storage units which were open to the atmosphere, also these units were to be emptied.

I hope this has now been completed and one of the main areas of odour has now been removed. Other actions are taking place which we shall hear about later.

The meeting with Peter was due to Alistair's involvement, and without his input, I do not believe residents would be hearing how AW intend to resolve the issue.

Derek Manning has also been involved fully as FPC consultant and has asked AW some very important questions and offered them some useful solutions.

I feel we are now closer to having this issue fully resolved.

I now handover to Councillor Steve Dixon.

2 Apologies from the Rt Hon Alistair Burt

- 2.1 Councillor Dixon offered apologies from the Rt Hon Alistair Burt. He had wanted and planned to attend this meeting but unfortunately matters at Westminster had to take priority at short notice. He has requested to be kept informed of all developments and wishes to assure residents that he will continue to work with FPC and CBC on resolving this matter.

3 Reports Anglian Water

- 3.1 Christopher Hayton Christopher Hayton, AW Public Affairs Manager read an update report (appendix A) advised that there were displays around the hall (available on FPC website to download) with a communication update also available (appendix B).

4 Public Participation Session

- 4.1 Residents expressed their anger and lack of confidence in AW and asked many questions
- 4.2 Some questions had been submitted to AW prior to the meeting and AW answers are detailed in appendix C.
- 4.3 The following questions were asked on the night but the answers were inconclusive or inadequate so AW will formally respond in writing shortly. These answers will be added to these notes when they are received.
1. What specifically changed two years ago that created the problem?
 2. Why was anaerobic digestion stopped?
 3. Why can't anaerobic digestion recommence?
 4. Please supply a full details of what AW are doing to solve these problems and a detailed works program.
 5. Has the system been ordered? What is the delivery and installation date?
 6. Is any permission (e.g. planning) required for any of the works from any authority
 7. Does AW have the competence to solve these problems
 8. How confident is AW that these works will work?
 9. Have these changes been made at other sites? Please specify.
 10. How will the smell be monitored? What tests have been done before the works commenced to provide the benchmark?
 11. Does AW rely upon the public to inform them there is a problem or does AW have specific equipment and procedure? Please specify.

12. Is there any equipment that could be installed in Fairfield that identifies when there is a smell problem?
 13. Will the bloodhound system still be needed once the new system is in place?
 14. What budget is this work coming from? Who is bearing the cost?
 15. Who is responsible for creating this problem?
 16. When will the problem be solved?
 17. Will the site be adequate for the new development?
 18. Please supply details of how residents should communicate with AW with complaints and please ensure AW staff know where Fairfield is.
- 4.4 AW agreed to look at ways to improve communication with residents and apologised for creating the problem and not communicating better in the past. They confirmed regular meetings will take place between AW, CBC and FPC and further public meetings will be arranged.

Meeting closed at 9.15 pm

Anglian Water Update Report

Fairfield Parish Council Meeting, 6th July 2017



Anglian Water is well aware of the odour issues being experienced by residents living in the Fairfield Parish, near the Letchworth Water recycling Centre.

We are incredibly sorry for the disruption that this has caused, and for the time taken to begin work on our long-term solution to the issue. The priority for our engineering and operational teams has been to identify the root cause of the issues and ensure a scheme was designed that would be sure to solve the problem.

We are sorry too that residents feel we have not responded to their concerns in a timely or sensitive manner. This issue has been raised at the highest levels within the company and every effort is being made to make the team available at all times to communicate updates and respond to community concerns. Our Chief Executive attended site and met with residents and Councillors to hear concerns first hand and is overseeing the scheme delivery.

Attached to this report is an information pack, presented to residents and councillors at the 6th July meeting, containing the detailed timeline for delivery of the solution on-site. The information pack also contains updates on the work that has been completed to reduce the impact of odours in the immediate term, our commitment for ongoing communications and engagement with residents and the council, and answers to some of the most frequently asked questions we have received.

On the following page, we have also set out the technical responses to questions we received via the Parish Council.

Works Update – Immediate Mitigation

- We have switched to a higher strength deodorising spray on site.
- We have invested £32,000 in a new odour suppressor unit to provide round the clock mitigation.
- We have covered the large rectangular storage tank and are in the process of emptying this of sludge. A more robust cover will then be fitted.
- Sludge imports to site have been stopped.

Works Update – Long-Term Solution

- Preparatory works begun on site on 26th June.
- Installation of new pumps and the construction of new pipework is taking place this month (July).
- Construction of new tanks, tank covers and the odour control unit will be completed by September.
- The solution will be tested and commissioned in October.

In addition to these actions, we have instructed an Independent odour consultant to examine the site and validate the odour management plan and capital solution we have put forward, providing assurance to both Anglian Water and local residents that this solution will address the issue.

Technical Questions

1. What absorber is going to be used in the odour control plant?

The system we will be installing is a widely used and well proven dry chemical deep bed scrubber system. The AWT Peacemaker™ system is a better solution than carbon filters as the filter media is more effective, longer lasting, and more economical to replace. Unlike carbon systems, the dry scrubbing media being used does not absorb moisture and is not affected by saturated gas streams.

This same system is used successfully at a number of our sites, including Chelmsford, Colchester, Ipswich and Northampton.

2. How much absorber is planned to be used in KG rather than volume?

We will be using 1600kgs.

3. What is the specific absorbance, either as grams H-2S/g Absorber or % wt of absorber?

This will be a minimum 140kgs/m³

4. Is it proposed to use gas stream recirculation at the absorber stage?

No, we will not be using this.

5. What is the proposed height of the discharge stack?

The discharge stack will be 5 metres high and will be comprised a 3 metre stack with 2 metre acceleration cone.

6. What is the discharge volume of any flow accelerator being used?

Flow acceleration is based on inlet volume. This is 2000m³/hr.

7. Is the major component up the stack fresh air from the atmosphere?

No fresh air is drawn up the stack. Air from the tanks passes through the filtration media and out of the stack.

8. What is the proposed discharge velocity of the treated gas stream to atmosphere?

The single stack option would have an efflux velocity of 7.05m/sec. The 3m stack with acceleration cone would have an efflux velocity >15m/sec.

9. Is the top of the discharge stack fitted with a discharge tier to produce a "pencil" discharge plume to atmosphere?

Yes, this will be provided via the acceleration cone.

10. What is the design discharge noise level 1m from the discharge point at the top of the stack?

The discharge noise will be measured once the system is installed and commissioned. Stack efflux noise silencers will be fitted if needed.

LETCHWORTH WATER RECYCLING CENTRE COMMUNITY UPDATE JUNE 2017



AN APOLOGY

Odours from Letchworth Water Recycling Centre have been made worse by the recent warm weather, and we are extremely sorry this has had an impact on you and your neighbours in Fairfield Park, giving you cause to contact us.

We'd like to reassure you that improving this is our absolute priority. Plans have been confirmed for a £330,000 investment to significantly reduce the bad smells coming from the rectangular storage tanks. And we are also looking at extra short term measures to improve the situation immediately.

THE PERMANENT SOLUTION

Our engineers started on site this week to measure up for the necessary pipework and fittings. Construction is due to start within the next few weeks. The scheme will see us decommission the existing tanks, which are causing the bad smells, and instead use new, covered and sealed tanks in a different location on the site.

The finer engineering detail and timeline of what we do when is still changing. The reason for this is we are striving to provide real reductions in odours sooner than would be possible if we followed the conventional engineering process for such a scheme. We do intend to share full timeline at the Parish Council meeting on Thursday 6th July, and will be on hand to answer your other questions then too.

Engineering schemes like this are not quick jobs, and it is likely to take until November to complete. But we intend to construct it in such a way that improvements in odours should be noticeable much sooner than that. Our engineering experts are working on this as we speak, and if we can accelerate the timeline by changing the way we work, we will do that. This is one aspect the engineering team is focusing on at present.

INTERIM SOLUTIONS

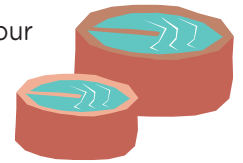
Our operational teams are taking additional steps to reduce odours now, ahead of the permanent scheme completing. Since the changes listed in the May newsletter, **we have:**

- Purchased a higher strength deoderising spray to be used in the odour suppression units. This will focus on reducing smells from the open rectangular tank.
- A second, new odour suppressor unit is on order, due to be operational by the first week of July. This alone represents around £32,000 of additional investment and will boost the existing suppressors on-site currently which are all operating around the clock.
- A temporary cover has been fitted to the exposed rectangular tank where most odours are coming from. This has provided some improvement but will be made more robust in the coming days to reduce smells escaping even further.
- We are closely monitoring all our operations, and adjusting them wherever possible to reduce odours. For example we stopped all sludge deliveries to site many weeks ago. This has not had an impact on the number of odour complaints, and coupled with the specialist odour surveys we have been running, we are confident the main issue is the open tank. This will be addressed by the permanent solution and in the meantime our operational efforts are focused on minimising odours escaping from this tank until the permanent solution is complete.

A range of other options are being considered too, and we will go with the quickest and most beneficial, regardless of cost. We know how impactful this is for people living locally, and would like to apologise and assure you we are taking a no-expense-spared approach to alleviating this problem as quickly as possible.



- 1 Rectangular tank to be decommissioned
- 2 Circular sludge tank to be covered
- 3 Centrate tank to be covered
- 4 Installation of vent stack and odour control unit to the atmosphere.



PLAYING A VITAL ROLE

The Letchworth Water Recycling Centre receives nearly 30 million litres of sewage every day and performs a vital role in serving the community, preventing untreated sewage from entering the environment and flooding homes and gardens. It means customers can flush loos, use sinks to wash and brush teeth, take a shower and use their white goods as normal.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can you shut the site down until it is fixed?

The Letchworth Water Recycling Centre is vital to allow residents to flush loos, use the sink, take a shower and wash clothes or use white goods like the dishwasher. If we were to shut down the site and stop receiving sewage from the surrounding homes, sewers would rapidly fill up and back-up, toilets and manholes would overflow, causing flooding and pollution in homes and the local environment. Clearly that's not an option, and unfortunately it is not possible to divert the massive volume sewage received from Fairfields and the surrounding area to a different treatment works either.

Are odours harmful to health?

While they are unpleasant, there is absolutely no risk to health.

Can you stop importing sludge to site?

We stopped all sludge deliveries to site many weeks ago. This has not had an impact on the number of odour complaints, and coupled with the specialist odour surveys we have been running, we are confident the main issue is the open tank and will be addressed by the permanent solution.

We know the current situation is not acceptable and reducing odours as soon as possible is the number one priority for our Water Recycling colleagues. Engineering solutions are underway and we would like to apologise again and thank you for your patience and understanding as we work through the engineering process and make the planned modifications.

What are you doing about the situation?

We are making both permanent and interim changes to reduce odours as quickly as possible. Hopefully this newsletter explains how seriously we are taking it, and that we do have the plans in place to fix this.

Will we receive compensation?

We are looking at making a community donation as a gesture of goodwill and in recognition of the affect on you and your neighbours. We will be happy to receive any suggestions from the community about suitable local causes via the parish council or via email. Once the permanent solution is complete, we will be in a better position to fully assess the impact and make an appropriate goodwill donation.

REPORTING AN ODOUR

Although we are acutely aware of the issues on site and are working hard to resolve them, we are continuing to monitor customer complaints. Spikes in complaints help us to pinpoint spikes in odours and make further improvements on site. Please report any significant changes in odours to us by:

- calling our 24 hour call centre on 03457 145 145
- emailing letchworth@anglianwater.co.uk



WE TRY TO BE THE BEST NEIGHBOURS WE CAN AND WE'LL BE DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO MANAGE THE ODOURS FROM OUR WATER RECYCLING CENTRE AND MAKE THE NECESSARY IMPROVEMENTS. WE ALSO PROMISE TO KEEP YOU INFORMED ALONG THE WAY.

Questions Submitted in Advance of Parish Council

Why has it taken so long to admit there is a problem?

We have been aware of the issues at our Letchworth site for some time and have been investigating the root-cause, and carefully exploring the most effective solutions to address the issue. We fully acknowledge that it has taken a considerable time to get to this stage, and we are sorry about that.

We agree, more should have been done to communicate our awareness of the issue, and the steps we were taking to look into a solution.

Will this resolve the whole issue of odour being emitted from the site?

Yes, we are confident that the solution we are delivering will remove the issues that are being experienced.

Can you explain why residents were given incorrect information?

We have never intended to communicate incorrect information and are sorry if residents feel that messages have been confusing. We hope that the information set out at the parish council meeting tonight will settle any doubts and confirm what we are doing to address the problem.

Why were residents treated unsympathetically by all staff involved?

We are incredibly sorry that residents feel that they have been treated unsympathetically. We are truly committed to delivering a solution that works for residents and hope that our improved communications and update meetings will go a long way in restoring local trust. We hope too that, through our continued attendance at meetings like tonight, we can rebuild relationships with residents and allay any ongoing concerns.

Considering its history of neither anticipating, assessing nor addressing odour issues at the Letchworth plant, how is AW going to monitor the situation now? As the report states, there has not been any type of odour measuring system in place so far, such as onsite and offsite sniffing. Will there be one? If not, why not?

Due to the nature of the processes at our Water Recycling Centres, we are always aware of the risks of odour nuisance. To mitigate this, we complete odour management plans that look to identify the highest risk areas of our sites and then implement odour management measures where required.

We have recently updated the site's odour modelling and odour management plan and the capital scheme being delivered will address the risks that have been identified.

We are in the process of purchasing some new odour monitoring equipment and we will use this to complete weekly routine monitoring on site. We will also use this, along with weather station data, to investigate reported odours when they are received.

We do also use customer feedback to identify any issues.

Your newsletter states that you 'are closely monitoring all your operations ... to reduce odours'. Without an automatic odour monitoring system, how are you doing this in practice? Are you really relying on residents' complaints to your Facebook page to do this?

We have been carefully reviewing the operations that take place on site, and the associated risk of odour release. We have then taken action to address this risk, such as installation of covers and suppression sprays.

We will also be carrying out odour impact plans before non-routine operations are carried out and will be sure to issue advanced warning, via the council, when we believe there is an increased risk of odour from certain operations.

It may sound odd, but we do heavily rely on employee and customer feedback when it comes to managing odour as the human nose is the best tool we have when identifying and addressing odour.

Without an odour measuring system, how are you going to prove that your improvement plan has worked come November? Are you again only relying on residents' complaints?

On completion of the scheme, we will install odour loggers on the site to test for H₂S. We will also carry out further odour modelling and emissions surveys.

As part of the long-term solution that is being installed, we will include an ongoing monitoring plan for the site, including regular maintenance and monitoring of the odour control units performance.

Again, customer feedback will be key to measuring the success of the measures we put in place.

The report recommends that you should provide 'details of all monitoring undertaken during routine operations and following complaints (such as onsite and offsite sniffing)' (p. 24, 4.7.2). How are you planning on doing this?

All data from routine and reactive monitoring actions will be shared with the parish council and environmental health team.