

Walleys Quarry Landfill

Liaison Committee Meeting

8th October 2020 – 4pm – Castle House & Zoom

Present:

In person

Simon Tagg (ST) – Staffs CC
Angela Drakakis-Smith (ADS) – (TRA) Residents Representative
Marion Reddish (MR) - NULBC
Henryk Adamczuk (HA) – Silverdale Parish Council
Nigel Bowen (NB) – Red Industries
Paul Lealman (PL) – Red Industries
Sam Boden (SB) - Notetaker

Remotely

Darren Walters (DW) – NUL Environmental Health
Rob Wallis (RW) – NUL Environmental Health
Elaine Moulton (EM) – NUL Planning
Ian Barnett (IB) – Residents Representative
Neil Goodwin (NG) – Staffs CC Planning
Amelia Rout (AR) - NULBC
Jake Wu (JW) – Silverdale Parish Council
Sarah Dennis (SD) – Environment Agency

Apologies:

Dave Jones – NULBC
Jon Clewes – Red Industries

Non Attendance:

Poolfields Residents Association – Residents Representative
Tony Eagles (Knutton Residents Association) – Residents Representative
Brian Johnson - NULBC

1. Introductions – *Simon Tagg*

All members introduced themselves.

2. Apologies

As above

3. Minutes of last meeting

Agreed as a correct record.

4. Matters Arising

DW – completed actions from previous meeting.

5. Company Update – *Nigel Bowen/ Sam Boden*

Presented by NB, as per slides included with minutes.

Questions:

AR – wanted confirmation Apedale Mining is within the LCF radius. Confirmed.

MR – St Andrew’s Church looking to apply to LCF, group to make contact with SB.

HA – Silverdale Skate Park – funding agreed through Red LCF. Has gone out to tender – awaiting pricing.

6. Site Update – Paul Lealman/ Nigel Bowen

Presented by PL, as per slides included with minutes.

Aerial view of site – including landfill gas engines, new engineering cells, leachate treatment plant, wheel wash, weighbridge, new transfer pad.

Total invested in the landfill in 2020 = £1.1m

NB – restoration phases explained.

Questions raised:

ST – are some areas being capped? NB – yes, filling up to presettlement levels and will put temporary caps on these areas. Permanent cap will be applied in time once practical and considering settlement of site. The temporary cap helps contain gas and contain leachate.

MR: Are Cell 1 and 3 at stage of permanent capping? PL: Cell 1 has approx.. 40-50 000m³ left, which will be filled Oct into Nov, then temporary capped. Need to make sure it settles in a controlled manner before the permanent cap is applied. NB – Some areas of the site have been temporary capped with HDPE liners previously to reduce water ingress and fugitive emissions and those areas will be exposed again as start to allow filling of new engineered phases.

ADS – what is height of pre-settlement? PL – approx. 4m higher than it is currently. NB – operating within the presettlement levels as agreed within planning permission, approx. 6m above the height of the boundary wall. SD – Landfill base 85 AOD, final height 145 AOD. Approx. 20m above ground level at the highest point.

ADS – is certain waste contained within separate cells? PL – material Red take in goes generally into the same cells. Soils and input materials for cover are kept separately, but everything else goes into the general cells.

HA – what is filter cake? PL/ NB – filter cake comes from the process of separating solids from water (waste reduction process) and the ones accepted at the site are non-hazardous.

HA – will the final level be a mound? Can we see a contour map? NG – As part of planning condition there wasn’t a formal restoration scheme at that point. This week Red have submitted a restoration scheme, which is being validated by Staffs CC officers. Will be published on the Staffs CC website once validated. **[ACTION – NG to provide link once restoration scheme published]**

7. Environment Agency Update – Sarah Dennis

[ACTION – SD to provide the slides presented by the EA to the Scrutiny Committee] SD – presentation will go on the EA Citizen Space page.

ST – know of TV/ media coverage, know of odours that are prevalent in the area, know number of complaints have risen up. ST/ MR have been asking people to raise complaints through the EA channels.

SD – Next community update likely to be once the permit variation application decision has been made. Expected next month.

Some restrictions March-June on attending complaints/ site. Restarted in July with site visits, odour assessments done etc.

Engineering plans have to be approved in advance – approval of the transfer pad was made.

March visit – did substantiate odour at a level of annoyance. Cover was with too much fines and not enough soil – this has now been remediated by the company and OK.

Sept – picked up additional cover was needed. Understand this has been rectified and will check when next visit.

Complaints: Feb 97, Mar 88, Apr 78, May 74, June 53, July 79, Aug 95, Sept 382.

Questions:

HA – when did temporary increase to 400t/a happen? SD – 2019 only, issued in Sept. No temporary increase issued in 2020.

8. Newcastle-under-Lyme Environmental Health Update – *Darren Walters/ Rob Wallis*

Slides shown [**ACTION – DW to provide slides for circulation**]

Complaints have been analysed for 2019 – Sept 2020. Complaints relatively low per month until increase in Aug (56) and Sept (198).

From June/ July, officers started to go out during the working day to complaints received. Have personally visited complainants when odours reported, but haven't been able to substantiate.

Environment Health's remit applies to statutory nuisance in a property.

Have analysed addresses of complaints – 483 complaints, 326 different addresses.

Most of complaints during the night when people are at home – reporting being woken up, having to shut windows etc. To date not been able to witness these due to officers not being available currently.

Small number of complaints about driving past the site or in the town centre/ community – not currently within the remit of the NULBC EH.

Have attended a number of complaints towards the end of the lockdown – have not personally witnessed any odours. Have a face-to-face conversation with residents, stay in the area for approx. 10mins, rate odour during that period. May detect an odour but it soon dissipates. Any complaints of 'rotten egg' or 'waste' odours are reported to Red and the EA to assist investigations.

Have had reports of odours attributed to the landfill by complainants which have been identified as agricultural odours. Have spoken to farmers to educate about best practice.

Officers have made reports concerning dust, gulls, quality of cover etc. These have been discussed with the company and the EA and we're happy with answers.

Heightened public awareness around the site may have lead to increase in complaints, people may be more aware of how to complain.

Looking at heat maps – plotting locations of complaints against wind direction, wind speed etc. to better understand complaints and if potentially justified. Every complaint is valid, but it requires a Borough Council officer to provide a professional judgement.

Questions:

ST – Can you only come out during the working day? I detect odours late at night/ early morning, so needs verifying at these times. DW – speaking to management about the resource to do this. Looking to have officers who can come out outside of working hours for a limited period of time over late autumn/ winter.

SD – the EA have been out outside of working hours at times when complaints are typically received:

One day in Aug – 5.30am-6.30am, 9pm-10pm

1st Sept – 10.45pm-11.30pm

3rd Sept – 9pm – 10.30pm

Findings from the officer, and site manager who went out separately, were similar.

19th Sept – 7.30pm

DW introduced RW.

RW – have been out to complaints of odour, dust, gulls, parking, debris in the road but some of these are outside the remit of EHD. Try to ensure someone goes out at the time an odour complaint is received – which can be within minutes. Typically find there is no odour in the location when visited. Some low odours or short duration, but not found anything could act on.

Dust – no domestic/ residential premises have been found to be affected. Dust is sometimes seen at the site in relation to vehicle movements, but no dust found to be leaving the site boundary.

HA: Do you have any kit that measures dust particulates? DW – use tools including dust deposition cages, deposit slides etc. Site has dust monitoring around the perimeter as part of the planning permission. If people are concerned, we can look to deploy deposit cages to determine any dust particulates. EA reports show particulates comply with air quality standards and Environmental Health are happy with these reports. Would welcome further monitoring by the EA to see if this is still the case. With regards to pollutants from vehicles/ traffic, there is monitoring at the A50 Meir Roundabout (PM10 and PM2.5), this site is compliant with air quality objectives. It is unlikely these will be exceeded at Walleys as the site has a lower volume of traffic.

DW - Odour monitoring – nose is very good at detecting odours. Officers will independently rate on the 0-6 scale – there is consistency between staff.

HA – when PM2.5 measured recently, it was at the max limit 89% of the time. So may be an increase in particulate matters when no monitoring is being carried out?

[ACTION – SD and DW to advise]

AR – there's a significant difference between the odour levels reported by residents and the odour levels reported by the EA/ Environmental Health. Can we analyse this difference and understand why there is a difference? DW – Statutory nuisance also takes into account others factors including affect on people and if typical for area. If can verify complaint levels at night, can put a course of action together. **[ACTION – DW to see if can present complaint levels v EHO's level]**

RW – EHO's are only at homes for 10 mins, so the resident's experience may be different. Resident may be saying the odour is offensive, but the EHO is rating the odour on its intensity. EHO is objectively rating, where the resident is subjectively rating.

MR – when you do a site visit is it reactive or random? DW – Looking at the effects of odour on reasonable enjoyment of the property, so driving round wouldn't identify these so we do respond to complaints.

MR – odour reporting isn't consistent across different people, is there any merit in having monitoring instruments? DW – follow recognise standards. DEFRA have published guidance but doesn't point to any particular equipment in place of human perception. Officers have been through assessment and have calibrated noses. RW – can look at the availability and cost of monitoring equipment.

[ACTION – DW/ RW to report back regarding monitoring equipment]

ADS – people smelling an odour is a symptom not a cause. Need to try to pinpoint where the odour is coming from so remediation action can take place. Is gas escaping? NB – Red have a number of environmental control procedures in place and we're compliant. We have gas collection systems, electricity generation, additional capping in place, daily cover. When you look at the statistics from DW, there are low levels of complaints during the peak period of lockdown when people were at home. There's been no change to our site operations or conditions during April/ May compared to September.

ADS - £30k compensation letter that was going round people's houses may have exacerbated reporting, but Red need to be sure everything is being done right. SD – EA have not said there is no odour, but that we have not noticed an odour at levels of annoyance. The EA have ways to monitor gas as have Red to check methane emissions – ongoing practice. We check around leachate and gas wells. Temporary and permanent capping will reduce chance of gas escaping and any surface emissions reduced.

IB – timing of surveys have been flawed – pleased to hear EA have been going out late at night/ early morning. There's an issue of health with PM10 and PM2.5 levels. Monitoring location chosen by EA is flawed. People are getting reporting fatigue and residents don't see anything happening. Resident's may be becoming desensitised to the smell. There are odours that I've detected that I would say are a significant enough to be an issue. I've seen dust escaping out of the site gates. Is there a mist spray in operation? Wheel wash doesn't appear to be working. Have odours been monitored and modelled for surface gas?

SD – Re location of monitor. Looking at wind direction, in prevailing wind 51.6% of the time. PHE asked the same question, once we provided them with the information they were satisfied.

Re ground survey – we have hand held monitors. Would take readings from 100 locations, plus use the officer's perception of smell. Red do surface emission surveys for methane (indication of landfill gas).

Red reporting fatigue – EA do get repeat callers so not sure this is the case for everyone.

PL – wheel wash is in operation. There are mist sprays at the site boundary and at the far side near the new houses. Would disagree that dust is leaving the site – which is reflected in DW's findings. NB – would like to see evidence of reporting fatigue and desensitisation issues, rather than opinion. When members of the liaison committee see issues, such as 'dust escaping the site' they should be discussing this with us and this doesn't appear to have happened.

ST – have people become sanitised to the smell? Did people become desensitised to any odour over lockdown? AR – had my sister visit and she noticed the odour but I didn't, which comes back to the point about odour being subjective.

AR – what was the reason for the spike in September? SD – don't know the reason, when officers have been on odour tours on days with large number of complaints haven't been able to substantiate. DW – people's complaints are valid, but we haven't been able to validate them. Heightened awareness in the press, social media, the scrutiny process may partly be the reason for the increase. Borough Council are looking to extend times officers can attend complaints to be able to validate. When at properties we're not witnessing the odour they're reporting, not substantiated as a statutory nuisance.

10. Newcastle-under-Lyme Planning Update – Elaine Moulton

No further applications and not expecting any applications.

Consent has been granted for the Hamptons Scrapyard and adjoining field – there a number of conditions to satisfy before any work can commence so doesn't look like work will be starting soon.

Application for garage on Cemetery Road didn't happen.

9. Staffordshire Planning Update – Neil Goodwin

Hadn't had many complaints. Couple of complaints about mud deposits – but no issues when I've visited the site, will keep monitoring.

At the Scrutiny Committee question was asked about planning history, which seemed to suggest scheme of conditions amended in 2016. Didn't change types of wastes allowed – just used different terms (for example in 1997 scheme included terms like 'special waste' which are no longer used). Terms changed in 2016 but the types of waste did not change.

11. Local Councillor and Residents Representatives Comments

Covered in previous sections.

12. Any Other Business

SD – In the Scrutiny Committee we were asked about communication. Residents should be getting feedback from the liaison meeting. ST – links are provided on the Borough Council and Parish Council's websites to Red's website. Could maybe look at using clips from the meeting on YouTube? MR – can't have all 6,000 residents attending these meetings. Need better communication between all departments to get the message out there about what people are doing. Always include information about Walleys in the Thistleberry newsletter. **[ACTION ALL Resident's Representatives/ Councillors/ Red – channels for feedback to the community]**

13. Date of next meeting

Thursday 21 January 2021 at 4pm
Castle House & Zoom.