

Notes of Clayton Hall Landfill Site Local Liaison Group – Chorley Town Hall
Wednesday 16 May – 6:00pm

Present: Mark Clifford (MCI) Chairman – Vice-Chairman of Clayton le Woods Parish Council
Steve Grieve (SG) – General Manager – Quercia
Ian McSpirit (IMcS) – Senior Operations & Technical Manager – Quercia
Cllr Eric Bell (EB) – Chorley Council/Whittle le Woods Parish Council
Matt Lynch (ML) – L Hoyle MP Representative
Angela Baron (AB) – Assistant Secretary Residents’ Committee
David Clough (DC) – Residents’ Committee
Sue Clough (SC) – Residents’ Committee
Jackie Swire (JS) – Environment Agency
Cllr Michael Green (MG) – Lancashire County Council
Andrew Howard (AH), South Ribble Borough Council

Apologies: John Neville – Environment Agency

1 Minutes of last meeting

MC opened the meeting by asking if everyone was happy with the previous set of minutes. ML stated that he certainly wasn’t happy and didn’t consider the notes to be a true reflection of what had been said in 2 areas. After clarifying that the paragraphs in red font were ML’s SG asked if MC was now happy with the amendment and MC confirmed he was but also wanted the word “current advice” be changed to “initial advice”.

“ML commented that Lyndsay Hoyle had spoken to PHE about timescales and had made two points, one was that the ~~current~~ initial advice only concerned hydrogen sulphide and questioned whether any other gases should be considered and the second was whilst the levels of H2S did not breach Who’s 24 hour it did breach the parts per billion for shorter periods and what is the impact of short periods of exposure to these increased levels as concerns had been raised concerning breathing difficulties. ML also made the point that current advice focused on the physical symptoms but not metal wellbeing and that this needed to be considered.”

ML also stated the LH wanted to see evidence regarding issues to health over months and not just a 24 hour period.

2 Matters arising

2.1 Action Group/residents Questions

MC asked SG to comment. SG replied that all questions from 11 and 23 April along with those from the landfill consultant had been answered.

AB said that she had not received any further questions. AB also apologised as she had realised that she had not completed her action from the last meeting which was to provide the residents’ consultant’s comments and stated that she would do this.

Action: AB

MC stated that some new questions had been passed onto Quercia and the MAG representatives and that answers would be issued along with the minutes of this meeting.

3 Current situation

3.1 Progress on site

IM reported that the gas extraction from the capped areas was being continually monitored and tracked. IM did report that there had been a problem on Sunday when extraction couldn't keep up but this was rectified and by Monday everything was under control and that each well was now balanced. AB asked whether this could happen again. IM replied that it shouldn't recur but he couldn't guarantee for certain that it wouldn't however he assured the meeting that the team was getting better at reacting to changes in the gas field conditions.

SG reported that the company was looking for extra resource to man the site at different times particularly at weekends so that the good work which has been done so far is not eroded. He also wanted confidence in Quercia's ability to control the environmental impact of the site to build within the community. SG stated that this would hopefully be in place for the forthcoming bank holiday weekend.

DC asked where the smell had come from and IM said that it had come from three small areas of the top seal of the liner on the slope. IM described the area of the small as two areas of about four inches in length and a slightly longer section.

MC asked if there were any more questions and there were none.

3.2 Odour Monitoring Results

JS reported that there had been a spike on 8 May up to 1.5 parts per billion (ppb) and that as it was a low recording she doubted that it would be noticed. The highest was on 1 May at 10 ppb, 30 April was just over 5ppb where some residents would have smelled this. JS reported that generally odour escape was being controlled although there were occasional spikes. She reported that from 10 May to today there had been a total of 30 complaints, 19 were on Monday relating to Sunday night/early Monday morning and that yesterday and today there had been less than one as this was how they liked to refer to zero.

SC stated that there were not as many comments on Facebook as residents no longer had faith in action being taken if report and went on to say that residents on Buckshaw were now picking up the smell.

JS reported that the number of EA staff on this issue were decreasing but assured SC there were still staff on standby and ready to go if needed however the number of complaints that were being received now did not warrant the numbers of staff previously involved and that the operation had been scaled back.

ML questioned if there was any more data concerning Buckshaw and JS replied that there was and that more recent monitoring for Sulphur Dioxide had not raised any concerns for either the EA or PHE.

ML asked if anomalies were being observed between the readings and the number of complaints. JS replied that occasionally but in the main they tended to be in line.

ML asked if JS could confirm whether complaints were still a good reflection of odours being smelled and JS replied yes.

EB stated that there had been burning smells and also that of manure and asked if any of the complaints were to do with that. JS confirmed that some of the complaints had been to do with smells other than the odour issues at Clayton Hall but that it could be difficult to actually pinpoint where they were coming from. SG added that it was difficult especially if chicken muck was being used and that he had explored this with the EA the previous week. JS stated again that the EA did try to differentiate but that it was difficult. EB stated that it's the time of year for other smells such as muck spreading and that that this is normal for people who live in the countryside and that residents needed to learn to live with it.

ML asked if the Quercia helpline was being used and SG confirmed that it wasn't.

A question was asked as to whether the telephone number on the website could be more prominent. MC agreed and said that the Quercia website was fantastic but if he wanted to find out about the problems then this was hidden under news and asked whether it could be on a different page. SG said that the company could look at this but assured the meeting that there were no attempts being made to hide information. AB said that she had tried to find it last time and if she put into Google Quercia Clayton Hall it took her straight to the news page but if she just typed in Quercia it didn't. **Action SG**

3.4 Regulatory Control

JS reported that the Multi Agency Group (MAG) was still in operation and that she was awaiting information from PHE at which point the MAG would be scaled back. JS assured the meeting that very little would change when the MAG eventually goes and that there would still be a very close presence with Quercia.

ML asked if there was a date when it is to stop and JS replied that it depended on the report from PHE. AB said that it was due a several weeks ago and MC stated that he was disappointed that there were no representative from PHE at the meeting. SC asked if that could be brought up at the next MAG meeting and JS said that she wasn't on that committee but that she would let them know. **Action: JS**

4 Communications

4.1 Multi Agency Group

SC asked whether planning permission could be revoked. MG replied that permits could be taken away and consents revoked but that it would need approval from the Secretary of State in order for that to happen. ML asked for a scenario where that could be the case and MG replied that there would need to be a significant and uncontrollable breach. ML asked if height was a restriction and MG replied no it wasn't and that in any case the height hadn't caused the odour.

ML asked if there was a major breach would LCC be confident that it had the finances to take a legal route. MG replied that even if it did the Secretary of State would need to approve the route to be taken. MG described the legal process and reinforced that the main regulator for the site was the EA

4.2 EA Website

An observation was made that there hadn't appeared to have been any updates last week and JS said that this could be done. **Action: JS**

ML stated the updates were not being sent out in good time at that the last one had been sent at 5.04pm on a Friday and that they should be out by 4pm. JS replied that she had no idea why it had gone out at the time but was sure there would have been a good reason.

4.3 Social Media

DC stated that there was still some mistrust by residents and reported that not a huge amount had changed although some peaks had been noted. DC reported that some residents were not happy with the answers received from Austin Lees but that IM had provided more details answers which would be issued.

MC also stated that there were sometimes issues with AL's replies and that he could always tell if there was a problem because no one would talk! AL's replies were more press statements and not actual fact. SG said that all updates to the Quercia website were always checked first by IM. IM stated that sometimes he gives MC answers before AL and then remarked that sometimes answers may be slow because he was actually trying to deal with issues rather than looking to issue a statement.

DC commented that it was good to see a little "tweeting".

4.4 Communication Plan

SG said that there was not a lot to add, updates were being done and tweets as and when. SG suggested that site visits were welcome if anyone wanted to come and take a look. MC asked what would be the best way to make contact for this and SG replied through email to IM or Matt Barlow.

5 Future Plans

5.1 Site Developments

MC asked for clarification as to the latest proposal to bring waste onto the site. SG asked if site developments could be dealt with first and went on to say that improvements to leachate control were being incorporated with the ongoing site development works to prepare the next tipping cell. Capping of a large area on top of the site is also in the programme for September.

Regarding the commencement of tipping SG stated that a method of working had now been agreed with the EA and asked IM to explain the process. IM gave details

and a diagram of the fill pattern was discussed. The basic description is to fill the area in narrow fingers to minimise the potential for odour release.

MC asked about the site height and IM said that he couldn't confirm what it was as it had not been recently measured.

MC then asked what contracts had been signed up by the company to bring waste in as it was unacceptable to residents that it should accept municipal waste.

SG confirmed that the company does not sign contracts to receive waste as the site is termed a "merchant site" and went on to further say that domestic waste is rarely put into landfill and goes to a treatment plant first and it is the larger residue that would be taken in. SG confirmed that it would mainly be commercial and industrial waste that would be accepted but that the company may get previously treated municipal waste but that the organics would already have been extracted. He could not say what proportion.

MC asked for the date when the first truck would arrive and SG stated next Monday or Tuesday. EB raised concerns about the number of vehicles using Dawson Lane. SG confirmed that the company was only allowed to accept a certain number of vehicles on a daily basis and that it would be no different than what operated previously. SG said that he would confirm how many vehicles. **Action: SG.** EB raised issues about vehicles speeding and SG advised that should this be reported and if proven those vehicles would not be allowed on site.

SC asked whether bad smells would now start again. IM said no and that the wells were being checked and are showing less than 1-2ppb.

SC asked when this area would be capped. IM replied that the area would be filled by mid-September and that the capping would start after that. MC asked if it would be done in strips and IM replied no the process of laying the cap was actually quite quick and that there wasn't much benefit in mobilising and demobilising the lining contractor to complete small areas.

SC asked if machinery would go near the capped area as she was concerned that it could become damaged and IM replied that nothing would go across the plastic.

MC asked how quickly the company could respond if underground fissures were exposed. IM replied that the company had pre-empted this and installed a ring of gas wells that could be drawn from so gas would be extracted before it reached the surface. SG also reminded the group that a much larger area had been capped than had been needed.

EB raised an issue concerning seagulls and household waste. SG stated that it was normal practice to place an inert cover over the waste on a daily basis so this would help and that there were bird scarers in place.

MC re-stated that the residents would be happy if only commercial waste was taken. SG stated that gulls shouldn't be a problem if the organic matter had been extracted.

ML referred to a comment by LH which was that only inert was should be taken onto site. SG said that this was not possible and would be commercial suicide. EB commented that landfill sites were few and far between.

MC stated that in 2016 the Group had been told that domestic waste would be going to Fylde and that it was disappointing to hear that this was not the case and speculated on the possibility of millions of gulls now descending. SG advised that it was LCC that determined where the waste goes and that what Quercia does is “pick up the pieces” and that landfill these days is often a last resort.

AB stated that she was sure that it was part of the planning permission consent in 2016 that it didn't include domestic waste. IM stated that the company only accepted what was on the permit.

MC said that the extension was for refined waste and that was what was promised in 2016 and that gulls were still a problem as when the scarers go off so do the birds with resultant issues if residents were underneath! JS said that all landfill sites have potential problems but that the content of domestic waste had changed massively over the years and that the EA didn't have any concerns. JS confirmed that she had looked back through Quercia's records and that there hasn't been a problems but that if there was the EA would act upon it.

AB stated that on Facebook there were questions raised with regard to what the likes of LH and CBC were doing. ML replied that a reply was still awaited from Michael Gove MP and that he still needed to catch up with LH. ML did say that LH was watching progress and is interested in the outcome of the EA investigation. ML wanted it noted that LH had not changed his position that the site should be closed.

AB asked when the current section is filled and capped in September would another cell be opened. IM responded saying yes, this was the area that was currently being engineered on the western side of the site

MC said that he thought as waste was being accepted from Monday that he would like a site visit at lunchtime on Monday. SG and IM both said from a practical point of view that this would not be possible as the start of accepting waste needed to be carefully managed and that health and safety was a priority. It was therefore agreed that the visit take place on Wednesday lunchtime.

6 Community Support

6.1 SG reported that he had made progress with Entrust which operates the Landfill Communities Fund on behalf of HMRC and that the Quercia fund was administered through the Lancashire Wildlife Trust. SG stated that some funds could be ring fenced for local initiatives and suggested that the group get together to consider what this/these could be. MC asked again that it be minuted that he declared he had an interest in the Wildlife Trust.

ML suggested that Chris Sinnett be approach as he was in the best position to offer advice as to funding. There was then a long discussion between mainly ML and MC regarding initiatives and who should be approached. AB suggested that the question be posted on Facebook to get ideas from

residents as it would be valuable to have their input. MC said that he thought that this was a good idea given there were 4.8k members on the Facebook page. JS stated that whatever initiative it was it still needed to fit the criteria of landfill tax.

SG stated that one criteria was that the project was within ten miles of a landfill site but that Quercia's position was to help those most local to the site. SG also suggested that he would like to see something in place quickly, ideally this year, and not twelve months down the line. SG also confirmed that the budget available would be dependent on the amount of waste accepted onto site. SG added that representatives from the LWT are prepared to help with project identification and qualifying criteria and felt it would be a real help to the group.

MC and AB suggested that the Cunnery Meadow children's park would benefit.

ML still stated that he thought it would be best to speak with those who have done a lot of work including Chris Sinnett and MC replied that he would take it on board and have a discussion with those people. **Action: MC**

6.2 Consultation Sub Group

The sub group is to be formed following MC discussions

7 Any Other Business

SC asked if the pathway had been re-stoned. IM confirmed that it had been too wet to do but now that we had had drier weather it would be.

SC asked about oxygenation/treatment of the leachate and when was it released into sewers. IM confirmed that he would reply to this question after the meeting
Action IM

8 Date of next meeting

MC stated that the next meeting was scheduled for three weeks but given that waste was being accepted from Monday suggested that it was in two weeks' instead as if there were issues these could be addressed more quickly. It was therefore decided that the next meeting would be Wednesday 30 May at 6pm at the Town Hall.