

Notes of Clayton Hall Landfill Site Local Liaison Group – Chorley Town Hall
Wednesday 30 May – 6:00pm

Present: Cllr Mark Clifford (MC) 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) – Whittle le Woods Parish Council
Cllr Matt Lynch (ML) – L Hoyle Office
David Clough (DC) – Residents’ Committee
Sue Clough (SC) – Residents’ Committee
Cllr Neville Whitham (NW) – Chorley Council
Sakthi Karunanithi (SK) – Director of Public Health Lancashire County Council
John Neville – Environment Agency
Amanda George – Quercia – Note taker

Apologies: Angela Baron

1 Minutes of last meeting

MC opened the meeting, thanked everyone for attending and then asked if all agreed to the last set of minutes. ML queried one item where it had been noted that he had asked whether the Quercia helpline was being used and SG confirmed that it wasn't. After discussion it was agreed that MC and not ML had asked this question. MC asked if there was anything else that needed amendment and it was agreed there wasn't.

2 Matters arising

2.1 Action Group Questions

MC stated that the EA had today released questions that had arisen from the last meeting and asked if all had seen. SC questioned if that was the update issued at 4pm and MC confirmed it was and other replied that they had briefly looked at it. ML asked if the statement from a resident had been included and MC confirmed that it was the long green one that had been added.

3 Current situation

3.1 Progress on site

IM reported that the odour situation was now stable and that on/off site monitoring continued and that Quercia continued to work with the EA to better understand the gas field. IM reported that staff had been in over the bank holiday weekend and that YELM also continued to monitor through a remote connection. IM confirmed that he believed there were no odours either on or off site and that the EA did not have any complaints. IM also confirmed that he didn't pick up anything on social media and that Austin Lees had not received any calls on the helpline. IM stated that he was now confident that we were starting to understand more accurately the intervention levels in order to properly monitor the gas balancing.

IM reported that there has been no further capping required and that infrastructure

was in place and was working as it should.

IM stated that waste acceptance had started with a couple of loads. This has not happened as quickly as had been hoped and that this revolved around customers having to get their confidence back that we were open. Some had requested more information regarding the EA position.

MC said that he thought from his last site visit they Quercia was waiting for samples to be returned from waste due to be accepted and asked whether they had come back. IM reported that one had and that there were no problems with it and that this would be accepted from Monday. A couple more trial loads were also expected. IM stated that Quercia needed to ensure that what was arriving is what had been seen. There had been another couple of samples received and IM stated that he would be making random unannounced visits to obtain samples to ensure the correctness of that waste stream.

EB stated that the sample IM had shown him last week was ok. EB questioned whether the material being accepted was also checked before it was tipped. IM confirmed that it was normal practice at a landfill site for a visual inspection to check as it was tipped to ensure it matched the pre-acceptance samples. EB stated that from what he saw it wouldn't attract gulls. MC asked if it was from the bottling plant and IM confirmed it was.

MC said that in previous meetings it had been mentioned about untreated waste and that he had been at Nelson and had passed a landfill on the M65 which looked like something from an Alfred Hitchcock movie because of the number of gulls. MC questioned that it had been said previously that this waste couldn't be accepted but yet it must be able to be given what he had seen. SG stated that the site MC was referring to was owned by Suez and that they had the contract with LCC and that they did take untreated waste however Quercia did not have those types of contracts. The only contract Quercia had with LCC was for material to go into the MRF to be made into fuel and not to go into the landfill. SG confirmed that Quercia was being more vigilant than in the past because of what had happened and that particular attention was being paid to odour around sulphates. SG reported that protocols had been agreed for all waste streams accepted onto site so that issues were prevented from occurring in the short and long term.

ML asked if a traffic light system was used for waste acceptance. IM confirmed no and that waste was either acceptable or not according to the permit which laid down what was permitted. IM stated that the company may make commercial decisions not to accept some waste streams.

MC asked if there were any more questions and there weren't. MC queried the deep core sample from the bottom of the site and whether the results of this could be made public. JN asked whether MC meant outside the site and MC replied inside. IM replied that he was not confident sharing raw data but stated that one of the actions being undertaken was to review the gas risk assessment and that would feed into the future odour management plan. IM stated that he was conscious that an isolated reading may cause alarm and may not be in context. IM stated that the company had engaged a landfill gas consultancy to carry out gas risk assessments which was a requirement stipulated by the EA. The previous assessment has been in

place since 2008 and the EA had asked to have this brought up to date in view of what had happened. The consultancy would produce a detailed report to work from. JN stated that there had to be a risk assessment in place for the permit which was referred to as GasSim and this would identify all the risks on site. The original assessment in 2008 had been based on a much higher waste input and a higher gas generation so the levels being recorded were not in line with the levels produced for the risk assessment.

3.2 Odour Monitoring Results

MC asked JN to comment about the latest results. JN stated that there had been 12 in total and that a breakdown would be published at the end of the week he summarised these as 22nd x 3, 23rd x 1, 24th x 2, 25th x 0, 26th x 1, 27th x 1, 28th x 2 and 29th x 2. JN reported that some of these complaints were describing different odours and possibly didn't arise from the landfill. JN stated that when EA officers had been in/around the site they hadn't smelled anything offsite. JN has requested a monitoring report which at this time hadn't been calibrated and reported that the highest value that had been recorded was on the 29th and that was 0.7ppb. JN said that there had been an easterly wind and relatively unsettled weather. The wind hadn't been strong at 5mph but all in all it was a positive situation. A question was asked as to how temperature affected it. JN said the higher the temperature the higher the gas may rise into the atmosphere and the wider it will disperse. Pressure also affected it and if pressure was high this kept the gas in the landfill. In winter there is low pressure means that the gas isn't kept in. JN stated that a reading of 0.7 was virtually zero.

MC asked SG about complaints being received through the helpline and that there hadn't been any. MC asked who was manning the helpline as he had sent out emails and had received a reply to say that Austin wasn't in until 1 June. SG confirmed that one of Austin's team was monitoring the helpline and that Austin was also replying to emails even though he wasn't in.

3.4 Regulatory Control

JN confirmed that visits were still being made and that a visit had been made to site that day. JN said he wasn't going to go into detail as Quercia wouldn't have seen the report yet. JN said that there was a much better control and understanding of landfill gas and that officers were on site every week to make sure that Quercia understood the gas control and to make improvements. JN said that improvements to infrastructure would continue. JN said that there was a landfill gas review on a monthly basis to make sure Quercia making progress against the suggested actions.

MC asked if anyone else had any questions and IM said he wanted to add that all the EA visits are unplanned and unscheduled. JN said that he too didn't know when some of them were going to take place. MC confirmed that the officers had also told him that they could appear at any time.

4 Communications

4.1 Multi Agency Group

SK stated that the MAG had been started in January to provide a co-ordinated response across agencies and focussed on two areas. The first to provide a co-ordinated response to address issues regarding the gas and the second was to properly understand the impact on health on residents to protect them. Alongside this a scientific group was established to look at monitoring results, complaints, etc. One of the criteria set was that gas levels needed to be back below 5ppb within 30 minutes. SK stated that the previous levels of gas were no longer being seen. The MAG has looked at the information provided by the scientific cell along with updates from all agencies and proposes to move from acute response mode into a longer-term involvement using this group so shifting from LCC multi agency under operation Merlin to a longer term regulatory group that the EA would head up but still would have all agency input. SK stated that if the levels changed significantly then the previous regime could be implemented.

SK said that the health survey had now been issued. SK said the PHE had designed the survey and that he had been involved as a director of PHE and also had been involved in the analysis of results. There has been some significant findings. The survey had been sent to 7200 households with 25% completing. Three areas had been analysed, the one closest (Meadows), areas further west, east and north of the site and Buckshaw. The area closest is the one most affected. The gas monitoring wasn't breaching any gas thresholds but people were experiencing symptoms such as burning eyes and this was significant in area 1 compared to area 3. SK stated that he was surprised with the residents' comments on the survey versus access to GPs, hospitals, 111 which didn't increase. The survey said residents were experiencing symptoms but not doing anything about it. SK stated that this could be because people could never get into their GP. ML asked if pharmacists had been included in SK replied they had and that was on Table 5. SK said he was surprised that there was a lot going on but that the NHS hadn't picked it up.

SK then addressed mental wellbeing which was included in the survey and which compared the wellbeing score against the UK population. Area 1 was significant in this but this did not impact people accessing healthcare. SK said at the time of the survey there were other factors that could affect the results such as the approach of winter, flu etc and these symptoms could be seen as similar. SK said that there was information in the report where people could access information and particularly mental wellbeing.

SK said that no similar surveys had been conducted and was particular to this site. A question was raised with regard to the ongoing investigation and that some is attributable to winter but were any of the results shocking to SK. SK stated that those residents who were really close to the site had been particularly affected based on reported symptoms. SK stated that there was nothing else to compare against and that was an issue and that all that could be done was to compare the three areas against wind etc to come up with an interpretation. SK stated that he was sure that there had been an impact because of the strong odours particularly in area 1. There was still a debate about symptoms as burning eyes were not expected with the levels of gas monitored and said further exploration was needed. SK stated this was not an in-depth scientific study involving physical checks and lab results which would not have been possible.

MC asked whether the scientific study would stand up in a court of law. SK said it

was robust for the purpose of understanding but not for the purpose of proving anything. SK said that this study was the best that could be obtained given the timescale. SC stated that she had never had burning eyes but had had a burning throat which she'd not had before. SK asked if she had it now and SC replied no she'd not had it for some time.

EB asked about the lads working on the site and what checks were done on them especially as some were working on top of the site and had been for 4-5 months. SK stated that the focus had been on the community and that Quercia work within health and safety frameworks. SG reported that anyone working in or around the site have personal gas monitors and if they trigger then they would remove themselves from the area. There had been contractors working on site too and it had been discussed that it was not impacting on their health. SG said that there had been no complaints from anyone working on the site.

MC said that he had been given a lot of access over the months and that when you were on site and on the top you were in fresh air because the gas was following the lie of the land. You could pick up smells but never as strong and in the villages.

IM disagreed with this and stated that he had never smelled anything as bad in the community as had been experienced on site but that could be down to personal opinion. MC stated the worst he had smelled it was in December in the dip in Sheephill Lane. SC stated that January and February were bad there too.

ML said that there was clearly some consistency in the survey with Area 1 with the second being Buckshaw and third being Whittle le Woods and Cuerden and part of South Ribble and noted some anomalies. There were more affected in Area 1 with symptoms but vomiting was reported higher in Area 3 and asked if this was just an anomaly. SK said that this couldn't be validated. SK said that they had been looking to see if there had been a significant difference between areas then they would have tried to explain. ML said that it clearly said there was a pecking order of 1, 2, 3 with area 1 most affected and it was good to see that the evidence stacks up but didn't see how it could be used, it confirmed what was known, but it didn't evidence anything. ML asked if it gains more power because it had been taken over 25% of the cross section. SK said the information had been gained from complaints and people ringing in and that this had been different as they had been trying to understand how people had experienced it. SK said that he could say over a period of time the area had been affected and that the survey was relevant at the time it was conducted.

EB said he'd been campaigning and knocking on doors for four months and had lots of complaints of smells but not people being ill although he had had some. SK said that those who said they were ill but hadn't gone to their GP hadn't been picked up in the survey.

MC observed that the highest feeling was that of tiredness. SK stated they weren't expecting that but had been expecting mucus membrane issues and what the survey had brought out was the mental impact. ML said that a common complaint was that some couldn't sleep because of the smell and suggested the feeling of being tired could be associated with people feeling frustrated because they couldn't sleep because of the smell and not a reaction of what was being inhaled.

DC stated that some people were getting anxious because of pooling overnight and they couldn't open the windows which would also contribute.

JN said that the EA had never seen a long term health impact and that anxiety and anger were normal responses from people who couldn't enjoy their property.

SK said that there was a difference in being affected scientifically as opposed to actually and that perception wasn't something they couldn't do anything about.

NW said that his experience having been canvassing for six months was that it was worse in January and that it was consistent in Mendip and that there were a lot of people saying that children weren't sleeping, which in turn affected parents. NW said he's spoken to a lot of people and that it did go up and down.

SK stated that the loss of sleep can affect wellbeing.

MC asked a question to JN about topography. JN said that the EA had very robust systems in place and that at time it had been strong. IM added that it hadn't triggered personal alarms and JN agreed. IM said that you are aware of the odour before the alarms trigger. A question was asked as to what the trigger level was and IM replied 5 parts per million and the odour threshold is 5 parts per billion which is a thousand times stronger to trigger the alarm. 5ppm is a long term exposure, 10ppm is short term exposure. The alarms are two stage which first gives a warning and then another which states you need to take immediate action and remove yourself from the site.

4.2 EA Website

JN said it would be maintained but would be going to fortnightly and then monthly so as not to become repetitive and it would be kept live until November/December to display monitoring results. There will be updates as the MAG meetings.

SC asked whether the situation was still being classed as important and JN replied absolutely and that it was a regulatory priority. JN confirmed that it was an EA priority to make sure the site was complaint and making improvements and that this was communicated to the public and members.

IM asked JN if resource was still being pulled in from outside the area and JN confirmed yes and that this had happened from Yorkshire and as far away as Kent and national experts along with landfill regulatory experts had been on site.

4.3 Social Media

DC said that there was no update from the independent consultant and there had been chatter about the survey. One question concerned muck spreading and JN said that he had smelled that today. DC said that it was definitely a different smell to the landfill. DC also said that someone had reported a smell of dead animals.

DC said that there had been questions raised regarding the work close to the footpath and said that he believed there was a regulation regarding this. IM replied

that the works would be close to that side of the site but all that was being done was the existing hole was being reshaped and that the side slopes were being shaped to suit the infill and that it would be close to the footpath but it was within the permitted area.

MC asked about whether the fencing would be upgraded as comments had been made about it being rickety. MC said his worry was the very light fibrous material and on a windy day this could cause problems and litter would escape. IM replied that it was for Quercia to manage the operation when the tipping area got close to it. SG stated that the company would make sure that the infrastructure was in place for the waste streams being accepted.

4.4 Communication Plan

SG stated the plan is moving forward as explained in previous meetings and that the offer was still there for people to visit with prior arrangement. An update would be released this week but that we wouldn't issue updates for the sake of it as this could become repetitive.

SG referred to the last meeting where a point had been raised concerning the telephone number on the website. This hadn't been changed yet but were looking to increase the font size.

MC took this opportunity to make a correction to the last minutes which made it sound as though he was saying the website was fantastic whereas what he had said was that it was fantastic if you were looking to put waste into the site.

5 Future Plans

5.1 Site Developments

SG reported that the weather had been great and allowed work to advance efficiently on site in relation to the new cell and leachate area.

SG confirmed that the company would be capping 16,000 sqm extra of the surface of the landfill and that this wasn't supposed to happen until next year and this should be complete by October/November.

MC asked if the 16000sqm was the v shaped notch and IM confirmed it was. A question was asked if the area would be grassed and IM confirmed this would be done at the tail end of the process.

EB raised a concern with regard to wet weather and vehicles leaving site with clean wheels so not to leave mud on the roads. SG confirmed that measures would be in place to make sure this didn't happen.

MC asked about the lake and noticed that this had now gone and asked what was being done to make sure that didn't happen again. SG said this was being reviewed.

5.2 Waste Input Plan

SG reported that waste had started to be received but would be gradual as some customers had to be persuaded to return.

SG referred to a question from the last meeting regarding vehicle movements and stated that he had been unable to find the exact number of permitted vehicle movements although he had found something on the planning committee report from the Highway Authority stating that for the level of vehicles proposed the surrounding vehicle network was adequate. SG went on to say the company was planning on taking in less waste than originally planned.

MC said he'd spoken to Matt on site who said that 6 vehicles an hour equated to approximately 3000 tonnes per week and that the company was limited to 150,000 tonnes. IM said this was correct and if worked back equated to 6-7 vehicles per hour.

A question was asked if vehicles were restricted going down Dawson Lane and IM replied he wasn't an expert but there were no restrictions on the roads. It was confirmed that the drivers that brought the waste in were not linked to Quercia.

MC said he'd spoken with Matt on site and would like a call when waste other than fibrous material was going to be received and then he could come on site and inspect.

6 Community Support

6.1 Landfill Communities Fund

MC acknowledged there had been a long conversation last time and SG stated from his perspective there was nothing to add since last time. MC said he had been in contact with Chris Sinnott by email and was waiting to meet. ML asked him to share the content of the emails as there were some options that had been put forward and MC confirmed that there had been options put forward but said he would do that once he had met with CS and suggested that a decision was deferred until after that.

7 Any Other Business

7.1 SC asked about the PHE survey and whether it would be used for anything. SK said the survey had been done to understand how the issue had affected the community and this had created awareness within PHE and this can be used if there are any other instances but nothing else was planned.

7.2 ML asked about the proposed site visit. SG stated that visits were welcome at any time. AG commented that the site visit referred to at the last meeting had been arranged for when the first load of new waste was to be accepted and that hadn't happened as planned. SG/IM reiterated that anyone was welcome to visit the site.

8 Date of next meeting

27 June, 6pm, Town Hall. It was agreed that that if anything came up in the meantime a meeting could be called more quickly.