



BRYN COMPOST LIAISON GROUP

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE
ON WEDNESDAY, 28TH MARCH 2012 AT 3.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

R.W. Gough - Chairman

Councillors: Mrs. A. Blackman, H.W. David, W. David, G. Hughes, D.V. Poole and Mrs. M. Tucker

Residents: Mrs. G. Davies, Mr M. Davies, Mr W. Griffiths, Mrs. P. Lapsa, Mr G. Reynolds and Mrs. C. Woods

Gelliargwellt Farm: Mr N. Richards

Public Health Wales: Mrs. M. Bowley

Environment Agency: Mrs. M. Davies, Mr J. Harrison and Mr L. Merlini

Environmental Health: Ms C. Edwards and Mrs. C. Evans

Officers: E. Sullivan (Committee Services Officer)

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: C. Elsbury, M.G. Parker, M. James and Mrs. J.A. Pritchard. Residents: Mr J. Cuthbert, Mrs. A. Gray, Mr T. Matthews and Mr R. Matthews. Public Health Wales: Mr H. Brunt and Dr. S. Jones. Gelliargwellt Farm: Mr A. Price, Mr R. Thomas and Mr P. Colley

2. MINUTES - 14TH DECEMBER 2011

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Bryn Compost Liaison Group held on the 14th December 2011 be approved as a correct record.

3. MINUTES - 2ND FEBRUARY 2012

RESOLVED that, the minutes of the Bryn Compost Liaison Group held on the 2nd February 2012 be approved as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Clarification was sought with regard to the number and causes of breaches noted on the Minutes of the 14th December 2012. The Chair confirmed that this would be addressed under Agenda Item 4.

5. UPDATES FROM ENVIRONMENT AGENCY WALES

Mrs Davies circulated copies of the Bryn Compost Odour Summary and the Bryn Compost Compliance Breaches Summary Report for Members information and referred to the findings of the Summary Report.

The Summary Report detailed the different categories, criteria and number of breaches at the site in 2011 and in January and February 2012. In 2011 there were 36 x Category 3 breaches followed by 7 x Category 3 breaches in January and February 2012 with 1 x Category 2 breach experienced on the 29th of February 2012.

As a result of the Category 2 breach a report on the incident was being prepared in line with the Enforcement and Sanctions policy and would be presented to the Agency's Enforcement Panel within the next couple of weeks.

Members were advised that intensive odour monitoring was currently taking place in the community and Officers were in the area at different times of day to record any changes in odour levels. Once this monitoring had been completed the outcomes and results would be shared with the community.

Mr Harrison confirmed that despite the decline in complaints in 2011, improvements had not been sustained and odour related incidents were still at an unacceptable level. The outcome of UK wide benchmarking and the constant developments in terms of best practice had been utilised in the annual review of Bryn Compost operations and identified a key part of the process where the risk of odour generation was greatest. The review identified that source material needs to be kept for a longer period within the building to ensure its stability before final maturation in the air. This amendment to the process had been presented to Mr Price, who is considering how best to achieve this operational requirement. Members were assured that Mr Price continues to co-operate fully with the Environment Agency.

Members sought clarification on the review and were advised that odour events occur if the material processed has not been sufficiently stabilised before it is moved out into the open air. Standards across the UK have been benchmarked and the different requirements at individual sites examined. This work has shown that the material needs to be stored and stabilised for longer periods. As a result the operator cannot process as much material but this is necessary in order to achieve the required results. The Environment Agency has entered into negotiations with Mr Price and based on the outcome of those discussions the Agency would then take a formal stance on how best to move forward.

Members sought clarification as to the type of sanctions imposed as a result of breaches of permit. Mrs Davies confirmed that subsistence fees charged to the operator would be increased in direct correlation with the number and type of breaches experienced.

Members sought clarification as to the number of warnings issued to the operator and were advised that a warning is issued for each breach and so 36 were issued in 2011. Mr Harrison also advised that the permit for Bryn Compost had been changed last year as a result of the evidence gathered.

Members requested that the current costs to Bryn Compost in subsistence fees be reported at the next Committee. The Environment Agency confirmed that if it were appropriate to do so, they would bring the information forward at the next meeting.

A Member asked the Environment Agency to verify that as a result of the annual review the cause of the odour within the operational process had been found, and it had been discovered that if the material is kept undercover for longer this would resolve the odour problem, however this takes longer and as a result the operator is unable to process as much material. If the operator agrees then the amended process would begin and if the operator does not agree to amend the process, he would be required to do so.

Officers were mindful that any discussions today should not compromise the current negotiations but confirmed that was in essence correct.

Members asked how this would impact on the local authorities contracted to Bryn Compost and were advised that this would be a matter for the operator.

Members queried the timescale for the operator's response to the proposed condition and were advised that the operator is presently looking at the condition and working practices and will advise the Environment Agency if he is able to comply. No specific date had been set for this but they would hope to receive a response by week commencing 16th April 2012.

Members requested that a formal statement be issued by the Environment Agency in this regard. Mr Harrison agreed to prepare a statement suitable for release in the public domain by the end of the week and asked the Committee Clerk to circulate to Members.

Mrs Davies outlined the monthly complaints data included in the Summary Report for information.

The site visit report appended to the Minutes of the 14th December 2012 was noted and Members questions were taken.

Members referred to the 'Overview' section of the report and expressed concerns that there seemed to be a number of reoccurring issues. Concerns were also expressed that the report sited the lack of staff knowledge on the technical aspects of the composting process.

Mrs Davies noted the concerns raised and felt that Members should be made aware that the report had been commissioned after the Odour Management Plan (OMP) had been put in place to look at all best practice elements of operations, over and above those contained in the OMP, in terms of odour and composting.

In relation to the level and competency of training at the site, it was noted that the site manager was trained to WAMITAB Certification standard, which is a requirement for the environmental permit. Operators have to renew their qualifications are reviewed every two years.

Members requested that evidence of the training management system be made available and Mrs Davies agreed to provide this information at the next meeting.

Concerns were expressed in relation to the reception hall doors being left open, as this was a significant source of odour, but also one the most basic ways to contain it. Mrs Davies confirmed that the doors to the reception hall were automatic, however they had been left open at the time of the visit. The problem had arisen when two or more vehicles entered the reception hall at the same time, as drivers rushed to drop off the material and leave. A member of staff now guided the vehicles into the reception hall one at a time resolving the issue.

The mix of material was discussed at length and Members noted that the operator now incorporated a greater proportion of green waste to the feedstock mix. Mrs Davies also advised that since the date of the report many of the recommendations made had been actioned.

The report also noted that the bio-filter had been dry, which was of particular concern to Members as this had been identified as part of the original 10-point plan. Members were advised that the report did not suggest that the filter was not working, but that it required watering and a routine maintenance system for this had been actioned. Members were again concerned that the fact it was in a dry condition clearly illustrated a failure in operational management.

Concerns were raised with regard to the leachate lagoon. Members were advised that covering the lagoon was not an option due to its size. The main risk of odour generation occurs when the leachate reaches a certain level in the lagoon and has to be moved. Members were advised that the lagoon was currently empty.

Members noted that the report indicated that the food waste delivered into the in vessel building was already fairly sour smelling and wondered if the operator had any contractual control over the quality of the material being delivered into the facility.

Officers confirmed that taking the waste straight from household to site would be the best option. Unfortunately the contract could not govern how regularly the householder put their food waste out for collection. However a measure was in place to ensure that the material is contained within the building and is covered straight away with green waste to reduce odour.

Members sought clarification as to whether contracts allowed the users of the facility to stock pile material before delivery. Officers were unsure if this information would be subject to commercial confidentiality, however they would make further investigations and should the information be in the public domain would feedback at the next meeting.

Members advised Officers that an odour incident had occurred this morning and it had been particularly odorous. Mrs Davies confirmed that an Officer had visited the site and confirmed that there had been no compost outside, the lagoon was empty and the doors to the reception hall had been closed. It was felt that the odour may have originated from the quarry area or silage and a full investigation was underway. Mrs Davies apologised but as she had not seen the Officer's full report, she was unable to give Members any further information.

Members also advised that they had been unable to get through on the phone-line. Mrs Davies confirmed that this had been due to the volume of calls received and requested that Members ask residents to be patient and keep calling, Officers manning the phones were working as quickly as possible.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Harrison announced that Luke Merlini, Project Manager was leaving for a new post. Members were assured that all communications would continue to be feedback to the community in the same way.

Members wished Luke every success in his new post and thanked him for all this hard work and particularly for the straightforward way in which he produced the information for the community.

The meeting closed at 4:09 p.m.