

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

RIVER RHYMNEY TASK GROUP

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, TREDOMEN
ON MONDAY, 3RD NOVEMBER 2003 AT 2.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor N.G. Turner - Chairman

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Councillor R. Woodyatt, Mr. A. Brown, Mr. R. VanGemeren, Mr. G. Hobson, Miss H.C. Morgan

THE COAL AUTHORITY

Mr. A. Norton

DWR CYMRU WELSH WATER

Mr. P. Kemp

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY WALES

Mr J. Gregory, Miss M. D'Onofrio

RHYMNEY RIVER FEDERATION OF ANGLING CLUBS

Mr. D. Roberts

WESSEX WATER ENTERPRISES

Mr. P. Oaten

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M.G. Parker, Mr. S. Hill (Coal Authority) and Mr. B. Pritchard (Rhymney River Fishing Federation).

MINUTES - 19TH AUGUST 2003

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th August 2003 were approved as a correct record.

RIVER POLLUTION TASK GROUP

1. The meeting was convened to consider how to develop joint working arrangements to improve responses to problems and proactive protective measures with the aim of improving the quality of the River Rhymney.
2. Following from discussions at the previous meeting, it was reiterated that there is a need to establish accepted communication lines and rapid response systems to tackle the various problems on the River Rhymney. This would include the need to highlight specific problem areas and take necessary action to prevent regular occurrences. It was accepted that this could only be achieved if all parties work together sharing information and local knowledge, pooling resources and creating mapping systems and databases, which could be utilised by each organisation.

3. It was accepted that there is a need to establish a database system and the practicalities of collating the information from each data-collecting department within the various organisations was discussed. Miss. D'Onofrio of the Environment Agency indicated that she would be willing to act as the central co-ordinator and undertake such a role. It was agreed that, subject to the implications of the Data Protection Act, Miss. D'Onofrio and Mr .J. Gregory would consider the specific information that would be required (i.e. source of complaints, details of complaint, date reported, which agency is responsible, action taken, date completed, future works required) and that details of the preferred way that the information should be received would be circulated to each organisation to ensure that a consistent approach is adopted when the information is presented for input onto the database. Mr. VanGemeren indicated that the County Borough do hold a land drainage database and indicated that he would examine the feasibility of allowing other agencies access to that information.
4. It was anticipated that this information would be reviewed by the Task Group on a regular basis in order that specific problem areas can be discussed and a course of action identified to prevent regular occurrences.
5. Reference was also made to the need to focus on proactive initiatives and it was anticipated that the information provided by the database would assist in identifying problem areas, which could be considered when programming areas for improvement. This improvement programme could then be development and reviewed in conjunction with interested agencies and user groups.
6. It was also accepted that there is a need to more quickly determine which organisation is responsible for dealing with specific incidents and that a system of ensuring that a rapid response is received should be introduced, possibly by delegating more than one Officer within an agency to deal with a call (if the responsible Officer is not in the Office the message may be left until they return, in the meantime, the incident remains untreated (if another Officer was able to deal with the matter it would be progressed more quickly). It was agreed that each Agency should provide the contact details of their respective responsible Officer(s), which would be circulated with the papers for the next meeting.
7. Mr Oaten, Wessex Water, advised members that as a result of the work of the Rhymney River Federation in identifying manhole cover locations on plans, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water have approved an initiative to ensure that each Wessex Water manhole cover is labelled with an identification notice which will include a twenty-four hour customer care contact number and a specific map reference number (which will identify its exact location - thereby enabling incidents to be dealt with more quickly). He displayed a copy of the proposed notice to those present.
8. Mr. Roberts pointed out that there are still many outlets into the river which do not appear on the definitive map and indicated that the Federation would be able to provide manpower to assist in identifying those locations to ensure that all sources are incorporated within the document. Its members would also be able to take water samples if Officers from the respective agency were unable to immediately respond.
9. Mr. Kemp detailed the initiatives that Dwr Cymru Welsh Water is to undertake as part of its capital programme (desilting, a dedicated maintenance team, capital investment for a pumping station, upgrading of combined sewer overflows, increased CCTV operations and repairs to rising mains which have a history of pollution). Mr. Oaten indicated that he has prepared a report to be presented to Dwr Cymru which deals with issues regarding illegal connections (e.g. where a washing machine has been accidentally connected to storm water drains or sewers rather than the foul water drains or sewers) and the illegal dumping of rubbish in the water course and will be requesting that consideration be given to the reintroduction of the regular joint inspections of certain sewers. He would advise of the outcome in due course.

10. It was suggested and agreed that in order to ensure that each agency is aware of what another proposes within its programmes for improvement and future investment, details should be circulated at the next meeting.

11. **NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held at 2.00 p.m. on 26th January 2004 and the following information be presented at that time:-

- (a) Update on progress on database - to be provided by the Environment Agency;
- (b) Contact list of responsible Officers - to be provided to County Borough to collate;
- (c) Details of programmes for improvement and future investment - to be provided to County Borough to collate;
- (d) Illegal connections – to be provided by Wessex Water

The meeting closed at 3.00 p.m.