



## RIVER RHYMNEY TASK GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, TREDOMEN  
ON THURSDAY, 9TH SEPTEMBER 2004 AT 2.00 P.M.

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### PRESENT:

#### **Caerphilly County Borough Council:**

Councillors J. Bevan and R. Woodyatt, Mr. G. Hobson, Mr. R. Van Gemeren,  
Ms. M. Sutherland, Miss H.C. Morgan

#### **Coal Authority:**

Mr. A. Norton

#### **Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water:**

Mr. H. Williams

#### **Environment Agency Wales:**

Miss M. D'Onofrio, Mr. A. Robinson, Mr. D. Walters and Ms. K. Vowles

#### **Rhymney River Federation of Angling Clubs:**

Mr. D. Roberts and Mr. B. Pritchard

#### **Wessex Water Enterprises:**

Mr. A. Edmunds

### 1. APOLOGY

An apology for absence was received from Councillor M.G. Parker.

### 2. CHAIRMAN

Councillor R. Woodyatt was moved to the Chair.

### 3. Mr. Paul Oaten - Wessex Water Enterprise

The Chairman reported that Mr. Paul Oaten has left his current post to take up another position within Wessex Water and as such would no longer be able to attend meetings of the Task Group.

Members wished to place on record their appreciation to Paul for the work he had undertaken on behalf of the Group and to the valuable contributions he had made at the meetings. They also wished him well in his future role within the organisation.

The Chairman then welcomed Mr. Alan Edmunds from Wessex Water Enterprise to his first meeting of the Group.

**4. Noel Turner - Former County Borough Member**

Reference was also made to former Councillor N.G. Turner and to the role he had performed as Chairman of the Group. It was agreed that a letter be sent to thank him for the role he performed in bringing together the interested parties to tackle the various problems on the River Rhymney.

**5. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th April 2004 were approved as a correct record.

**6. Water Quality Update**

Mr. Andy Robinson, Environment Agency reported that water quality monitors have been deployed for the last five months but the reports received had not been particularly useful in identifying the actual sources of pollution. He pointed out that an alternative monitoring option for water quality, the passive monitoring measure, which can more easily monitor organic specific chemicals is now being used to retarget the areas and will be used to detail biological abundances. This will be used on a trial basis and the results reviewed to determine whether it should be rolled out to other areas.

Whilst appreciating that the sources of pollution at the upper end of the river have not yet been identified, reference was made to the affects on the lower reaches of the river. It was queried as to whether monitoring could be undertaken below the impacted section in order to determine whether a problem exists. It was noted that Mr. D. Roberts had collected samples below the Pant Glas Industrial Estate using the three-minute kick test and he expressed his concerns at the fluctuations in the PH valves monitored. He indicated that he will analyse the data and give a further report to the next meeting.

Mr. Roberts indicated that gammarus cages have been sited at Bedwas to monitor shrimp populations in the river. The almost total lack of shrimps indicated that pollution in this stretch of the river is worse than that identified in the upper reaches of the river above Bargoed earlier this year. Mr. Roberts explained that a cage has also been installed at Nant Bargoed. Each is monitored on a twenty-four hour basis and the shrimps are replaced on a monthly basis. He indicated that there are twenty-two shrimps in each of the traps and that he would report further information to the next meeting.

The members wished to place on record their appreciation to Mr. Roberts and the Federation for their dedication and commitment to the role they perform.

Mr. Robinson indicated that network monitoring is to be undertaken in the near future and this area (Bedwas) will be included at that time. He indicated that he would request that the data is processed as quickly as possible in order that a full analysis can be undertaken.

Mr. Robinson then reported that biological works on the upper end of the river suggests recovery but it was pointed out that no biological survey has been undertaken below the Old Mill, Bargoed. Mrs. Vowles confirmed that monitoring would be undertaken in these areas as part of the network monitoring of sites.

Councillor R. Woodyatt requested that the data analysed by the Environment Agency earlier this year should be presented to the next meeting along with the data which will be collated as part of the exercise currently being undertaken. In view of the amount of analysis undertaken by the Federation it was agreed that there should be a joint report by the Agency and that organisation.

## **7. Biological Abundance Update**

Mr. Robinson reported that the biological quality measures of the ecology of the water from Rhymney downstream have indicated that its ascetic quality seems to have deteriorated. He referred specifically to issues in the vicinity of the Nant Melyn and Carno areas. It was felt that there is a need to target industrial areas and monitor closely the companies which drain into this area.

Reference was made to two specific incidents at the top of the river, once where a farmer's fly tipping appears to be encroaching into the watercourse and the second whereby foam had been discharged into the river.

With regards to the latter Mr. Waters indicated that the company concerned have been contacted and requested to report on the cause of the discharge. He requested that any incidents of this nature be advised to the Environment Agency in order that they can be logged and investigated and any appropriate action taken.

## **8. Incidents on Database**

Ms. D'Onofrio circulated copies of an updated list of incidents reported to the Environment Agency since May, together with details of any action taken or proposed and responded to queries raised on the information provided and confirmed the action being taken on each of the reported incidents.

In respect of the Nant Cylla running black, she referred to the impact of the Penallta Colliery Development Scheme and to the discharges into the river from that point and referred to enforcement action being taken. Mr. Alan Brown referred to the planning conditions to which the developer must adhere and indicated that he would also raise the matter with the relevant Planning Officer.

In relation to problems experienced in the vicinity of the Old Mill, Bargoed it was confirmed that the illegal connection now discharges into the sewer.

The Chairman reported that Maria has been promoted to another part of the organisation and those present paid tribute to the role she has played since the inception of the Task Group and to the valuable liaison she has established with all groups who use the Rhymney River.

## **9. Minewater Contamination at Tiryberth**

Mr. A. Norton was able to confirm that the works at Tiryberth have now been completed and will be monitored on a fortnightly then monthly basis. He indicated that this would give the opportunity to identify sites for settlement ponds and referred to exploratory boreholes being undertaken by the consultants. He wished it noted that the steps to the monitoring structure have been vandalised but that the monitoring can continue to be undertaken.

## **10. Culvert at Pontlottyn**

Mr. Norton indicated that as soon as the venting system is placed in the main river culvert at Pontlottyn monitoring structures will be installed. He indicated that he would present an update on progress to the next meeting.

Mr. Van Gemeren confirmed that permissions required from the Council which would allow this work to proceed had been granted.

A query was raised as to whether this is a priority of the Coal Authority and it was confirmed by Mr. Norton that that the culvert discharge was not currently on the EA priority list, from which the Authority work. A query was raised as to whether this is a priority of the Coal Authority and it was confirmed by Mr. Norton that the culvert discharge is not currently on the EA priority list from which the Authority work. Mr. Robinson indicated that he would supply the necessary biological information which could be used to highlight the importance of this work being undertaken as soon as possible.

#### **11. Training for BMP Testing**

Mr. Roberts circulated details of the one day 'Riverfly Workshops' to be held later this year. He indicated that he is encouraging Angling Clubs to participate in the monitoring of rivers (to enhance that carried out by the Environment Agency) and reported that the workshops provide an introduction to the identification, survey and monitoring of mayflies, up-wingflies, caddis flies, sedges and stoneflies.

Mr. Roberts indicated that the Agency have offered their facility at Brecon to facilitate the workshops and would act as co-sponsors of the course. He sought sponsorship from all parties involved in the Task Group towards the cost of the event.

In view of the two one day courses (which would accommodate a maximum of 15 on each) he suggested that 2 representatives from each Angling Federation (11 in all), the Environment Agency and the County Borough should attend.

It was noted that those trained would be able to undertake kick-tests and provide BMWP scores and that the data collected would provide valuable information on the condition of the river.

#### **12. Visits to Industrial Estates**

Mr. Waters indicated that he is trying to secure additional resources to enable an increase in visits to industrial estates and has submitted a bid for next year. He requested that those present should also consider exploring possible avenues for funding to assist in this aim.

#### **13. Pollution Prevention**

In noting that it had been agreed at the last meeting to establish a group, Mr. Edmunds pointed out that its role would be to prioritise areas which could be targeted for specific visits. It was noted that the County Borough representative would be Ceri Evans.

#### **14. Wessex Water Signs on Manhole Covers**

Mr. Roberts expressed concerns that certain signs placed on manhole covers have become dislodged. Mr. Edmunds indicated that this is being addressed and the signs are in the process of being replaced. Whilst discussing this items it was requested that the Agency consider placing signs on bridges in order that its location can be more easily identified when any problem is being reported.

#### **15. Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting be scheduled for mid January 2005.

The meeting closed at 3.00 p.m.