

## **RIVER RHYMNEY TASK GROUP**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, TREDOMEN ON MONDAY, 12TH JUNE 2006 AT 2.00 PM**

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#### **PRESENT:**

Councillor R. Woodyatt - Chairman

#### **CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Councillor M.G. Parker, Mr. R. Van Gemeren, Mr. J. Porter, Mrs. A. Jones, Miss. H. Morgan

#### **THE COAL AUTHORITY**

Mr. S. Hill

#### **ENVIRONMENT AGENCY WALES**

Mr. A. Robinson, Mrs. K. Bowen, Mr. D Walters

#### **RHYMNEY RIVER FEDERATION OF ANGLING CLUBS**

Mr. D. Roberts and Mr. B. Pritchard

#### **KELDA WATER SERVICES (WALES)**

Mr. M. Davies

#### **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J. Bevan, Mr. A. Norton (Coal Authority), and Ms. M. Sutherland.

#### **1. MINUTES - 29TH MARCH 2006**

Subject to the correct spelling of Permethrin and it being noted that the Environment Agency will continue to target possible pollution sources with passive monitoring dye testing and biological sampling which will compliment the work of the Fly Life Team, the minutes of the meeting held on 29th March 2006 were approved as a correct record.

#### **2. WATER QUALITY UPDATE**

Mr. A. Robinson, Environment Agency, detailed work in progress and referred specifically to testing on the Nant Melyn which will assist in identifying possible pollution sources. He then referred to the regular data being supplied by the Fly Life Team and to proposals to analyse the data in order that monitoring can be carried out more proactively in the future. It was noted that initial results from kick sampling undertaken recently have indicated that there is a reasonable diversity, although at some locations the abundance is low.

Mr. Vangemeren referred to areas of the river in Ystrad Mynach where he would expect fly hatches to be seen and pointed out that he had noticed a reduction of the hatches and referred to pollution he had noticed in the area during the last week. Mr. Roberts indicated that the river abundance is low for the time of year and referred to the amount of sewerage fungus and blanket weed which could have had an effect on sampling. Mr. Davies, Dwr Cymru, referred to works which have been carried out on a 225mm diameter pipe in Fleur-de-Lys approximately two weeks ago and to more recent works being carried out in the vicinity of the rugby field.

It was noted that it is essential that any incidents are reported in order that they can be investigated as soon as possible. It was suggested that an article be placed in Newline reiterating the importance of reporting incidents in order that they can be logged and investigated. Mr. Roberts also suggested that signs be displayed on bridges detailing a free phone number to which incidents can be reported and highlighting the specific location in order that the site can be more easily identified in a similar way to that adopted by Wessex Water on combined sewer outlets and manhole covers. Mr. Roberts indicated that due to financial implications this may not be possible but that he would be prepared to consider the suggestion.

### **3. INCIDENTS ON DATABASE**

Details of the list of incidents reported to the Environment Agency during the period 29th March – 22nd May 2006 were noted and Mrs. Bowen responded to queries raised on the information provided and confirmed the action being taken on each of the reported incidents.

A specific query was raised in relation to an incident in Rhymney with regards to sewage entering river at the rear of Old Brewery Lane Farm at the top of Rhymney which had spread NPK into a watercourse which is used for drinking water. It was noted that in view of the size of the drainage system in that area investigations are still ongoing. Mr. Porter indicated that he would clarify, which, if any, properties in the vicinity may have been affected.

Reference was also made to the incident in relation to a septic tank overflow near Blaen Rhymney Reservoir and it was noted that officers have been unable to trace the tank but would be visiting the site on foot to try to locate it.

Mr. Roberts indicated that there had been a discharge in Bargoed Woodland Park which is not detailed within the data and Mrs. Bowen indicated that she would examine the database system and liaise with Mr. Roberts in due course.

Following discussions on the pollution reports as detailed in the data circulated, it was agreed that a further report on the progress made on each of them be presented to the next meeting.

### **4. MINEWATER CONTAMINATION AT TIRYBERTH**

Mr. Hill reported that the flows continue to be monitored on a monthly basis and that the iron concentration remains at a low level. With regards to progress on the settlement ponds he reported that ground investigations and topographic surveys had been carried out in May and the results are in the process of being evaluated (although early indications have revealed nothing untoward in the area and point to colliery type waste rather than refuse type waste).

With regards to the total flows in that area, he confirmed that calculations have shown that the lower site and the proposed size of the reed bed is adequate for this purpose.

A query was raised as to the priority given to this project within the programme and Mr. Hill pointed out that the Coal Authority has limited finances but it is the intention to ensure schemes on the programme are progressed in order that they can be undertaken when finance becomes available and priorities assessed.

## **5. CULVERT AT PONTLOTTYN**

Mr. Hill confirmed that monitoring continues to be undertaken where the minewater flows into the culvert and is monitored by an automatic data log which measures the flow into the main river. With regards to the internal monitoring of the culvert, it was noted that whilst the ventilation pipe/chimney is in place and any gases are vented out of the culvert, there is still a need to ensure compliance with confined space criteria and procedures and consider health and safety implications.

With regards to the location of the settlement ponds, Mr. Hill confirmed that two areas have been investigated and the site South of the culvert has been identified as the preferred location and would be the subject of ongoing discussions.

A query was again raised as to where these works appear on the remediation programme and Mr. Hill pointed out that similar works are being progressed on other rivers and the priority of this scheme would be assessed against those when finance becomes available.

## **6. COMBINED SEWER OUTLET – FACTORY ROAD, BARGOED**

Mr. Davies referred to ongoing problems associated with the outlet at Factory Road, Bargoed and indicated that a telemetry line has been installed which links to the control centre and gives off an alarm based on the levels within the outlet as they relate to its orifice. He detailed proposals for amending the overflow arrangements to ensure that more water can be displaced to the main river if required and to the introduction of holes in the bypass walls which should improve performance. He also referred to proposals to link to the rainwater drainage to ensure an additional alarm system is in place.

Reference was then made to other areas within the county which are causing concern (Bristol Terrace, Puzzle House, Parc Cwm Darren) and Mr. Davies indicated those areas have been identified on the integrated catchment plans as being problematic. Mr. Vangemeren referred to works he had previously undertaken on the catchment area and indicated that he would make the details available to Mr. Davies.

With regards to the problem of discharge from the sewer north of Bargoed it was noted that a clearance had been effected and concerns were expressed that disinfectant, which would subsequently discharge into the river, had been used. Mr. Robinson indicated that he would ensure that the Company use such disinfectant in appropriate quantities as not to affect the ecological system of the river.

In relation to Bristol Terrace, it was pointed out that on several occasions items had been placed in the system which had resulted in its subsequent blockage. It was suggested that the manhole should be bolted down to prevent future occurrences and Mr. Davies indicated that he would determine as to whether, in view of ongoing problems, it would be possible.

## **7. PROGRESS ON RIVERFLY MONITORING SCHEME**

Mr. Roberts gave an update on the scheme and referred to the results which have been produced following the collection of the data. He indicated that it is intended to increase the number of sites (two more on the River Rhymney and six on the River Sirhowy) in order that a direct comparison can be made with a similar river system.

He then referred to the success of the recent Riverfly course undertaken with Anglers on the Taff and Sirhowy and anticipated monitoring commencing on the latter later in the month.

Mr. Roberts reported that he has been approached by BBC Wales with a view to being involved in a programme on the Riverfly monitoring scheme and referred to the article that had

appeared in Trout and Salmon magazine, which had generated interest in the making of the programme. It was agreed that a copy be forwarded to each member of the group for information.

It was noted that the scheme has now been running for twelve months and Mr. Roberts referred to proposals to thank the volunteers by arranging a barbecue in Park Cwm Darren and, in noting that a financial contribution will be made by both the Environment Agency and Federation, sought similar assistance from others present. He then detailed proposals to provide each member of the monitoring team with a fleece jacket with appropriate logo.

Mr. Roberts was pleased to announce that the scheme will go nationwide on 8th March 2007 at the National History Museum and each area/agency will be invited to run one project. He confirmed that whilst the prime project will be the River Rhymney, it is also proposed to monitor Nant Bargoed. He reported that the River Rhymney Task Group has been instrumental in bringing forward the scheme and at the moment are being held as an example of good practice.

## **8. BIODIVERSITY DAY-NELSON SPORTS GROUND**

Mrs. Jones referred to the biodiversity day to be held at Nelson Sports Ground on \_\_\_\_\_ and those present were invited to attend to view the exhibits and take part in the activities.

The meeting closed at 3.00 p.m.