



RIVER RHYMNEY TASK GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT DUFFRYN HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON MONDAY 2ND OCTOBER 2006 AT 2.00 PM

PRESENT:

Councillor R. Woodyatt - Chairman

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Councillor M.G. Parker, Mr. R. Van Gemeren, Mr. J. Porter, Mr. K. Morgan Miss. H.C. Morgan

THE COAL AUTHORITY

Mr. S. Hill

DWR CYMRU WELSH WATER

Mr. S. Webster

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY WALES

Mr. A. Robinson, Mrs. K. Bowen, Mrs. F. Attwood, Mr. S. Squires

RHYMNEY RIVER FEDERATION OF ANGLING CLUBS

Mr. D. Roberts and Mr. R. Williams

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J. Bevan and Mr. B. Pritchard (River Rhymney Federation of Angling Clubs).

1. MINUTES - 12TH JUNE 2006

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th June 2006 were received and noted. There were no matters arising.

2. NEW TREDEGAR FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME

Mr. Scott Squires, Environment Agency, outlined details of the proposed flood alleviation scheme and referred to the history of flooding in the vicinity of Birchgrove and New Tredegar Leisure Centre. With the assistance of aerial photographs, he illustrated the extent of the current predicted 1 in 100 year flood zone as well as the extent of the river catchment. He referred specifically to the topography of the area with its steep valley sides which generates rapid run off and to the low lying bridge at Birchgrove which partially obstructs the flow in the river in high flow conditions resulting in backing up and flooding.

He confirmed that the Environment Agency have undertaken a flood appraisal assessment and recommended the complete renewal of the Birchgrove Bridge and the refurbishment and raising of adjacent river training walls in combination with the creation of supplementary defences which would then provide 1 in 100 year flood protection to those residential and leisure facilities currently affected by flooding (properties in Birchgrove adjacent to the river, the site of the former Tirphil Primary School, New Tredegar Sports Complex including the pavilion and bowls green and the sheltered housing complex (Glan yr Afon) adjacent to Ruperra Street).

It was noted that the project has been submitted to the Regional Director for Wales for consideration and noted that if successful, the scheme, estimated at £4.4m, would be funded by the Environment Agency with a contribution from the county borough.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Squires for his informative presentation and for responding to the queries raised by Members and asked that the Task Group be advised as soon as a decision has been taken.

3. WATER QUALITY UPDATE

Mr. A. Robinson, Environment Agency, referred to ongoing research in this area of activity and to the progress that had been made in identifying the source of the pollution in the vicinity of Tir-y-Berth Industrial Estate. It was noted that the problem has been brought to the attention of the relevant company who have been requested to undertake necessary improvement works.

He confirmed that the regular data being supplied by the Fly Life Team has been assessed and will continue to be monitored in order to assist in identifying possible pollution sources.

4. INCIDENTS ON DATABASE

Details of the list of incidents reported to the Environment Agency during the period 23rd May - 25th September 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.

It was noted that other incidents which had been reported appear not to be included on the list and Mrs. Bowen confirmed that there had been difficulties in retrieving the information from the database and that this would be rectified for the next meeting.

Specific reference was then made to ongoing problems with the combined sewer outlet at Factory Road, Bargoed and it was agreed that a letter be sent to Kelda Water Services/Dwr Cymru Welsh Water Services requesting an update.

Mr. Roberts referred to works which have been undertaken in that area and to the installation of a telemetry line which links to the control centre and queried as to whether this system could also be used to alleviate problems associated with the trunk sewer below Groesfaen. Mr. Van Gemeren indicated that problems associated with that section of the sewer relate to minor collapses and as such, on this occasion, a telemetry line would not assist. He suggested that more regular monitoring and visual checks are required.

Mr. S. Webster (Dwr Cymru Welsh Water), who was attending his first meeting, indicated that he would raise these matters with Mr. Martyn Davies of Kelda Water Services.

5. 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 although early indications revealed nothing untoward in the area (and had pointed to ash type waste rather than general refuse waste), it now appears that certain levels of contamination are present on the site and this situation therefore requires further investigation to determine whether this site is suitable. In the event that it is not possible to proceed with this site, an alternative will need to be identified.

6. CULVERT AT PONTLOTTYN

Mr. Hill reported that vandalism at the site has damaged the data logger equipment and gas vent. He produced photographic evidence which identified the extent of the damage He confirmed that works have been undertaken to the gas vent and whilst the steps and handrail have been repaired several times, they are being repeatedly vandalised. There is a need to examine other options which may available.

Concerns were expressed that the perpetrators who are carrying out the vandalism within the Chamber may not be aware that the ventilation pipe/chimney is in place in order that gases are vented out of the culvert and that they could be at risk. It was noted that the numerous hazard signs have also been vandalised and removed on several occasions.

It was accepted that it is important to try to resolve the problem of vandalism and to ensure that the site is regularly maintained. Mr. Hill was requested to consider options to alleviate the problem and also to provide information on the risks associated with the culvert.

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 several of the results have been disappointing and that he had been in liaison with the Environment Agency on those particular areas. He referred particularly to one site upstream of Ystrad Mynach and another in Cefn Mably and it was noted that the areas would continue to be monitored. Members were pleased to note that the regular data being supplied by the Fly Life Team is ensuring that monitoring can be carried out more proactively and potential areas of pollution identified much more quickly.

Mr. Roberts then referred to an item which is to appear in the Trout and Salmon magazine, which will highlight the works being undertaken on the River Rhymney and indicated that he would circulate a copy for information.

Progress on proposals to carry out monitoring on eight sites on the River Sirhowy was highlighted and it was pointed out that not only will the data assist in determining where there are potential sources of pollution but also be use in order that a direct comparison can be made with a similar river system.

The meeting closed at 3.15pm