



RIVER RHYMNEY TASK GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON WEDNESDAY, 25TH JUNE 2008 AT 2.00 PM

PRESENT:

Councillor R. Woodyatt - Chairman

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Councillors M.P. James and M.G. Parker, Mr. S. Hodges, Mr. G. Jones, Ms. M. Iles, Miss. H.C. Morgan

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY WALES

Mr. D Walters, Mrs. F. Attwood, Ms. M. D'Onofrio

RHYMNEY RIVER FEDERATION OF ANGLING CLUBS

Mr. D. Roberts and Mr. R. Williams

KELDA WATER SERVICES (WALES)

Mr. D. Power

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. J. Porter and Ms. M. Johnson (CCBC), Mr. S. Hill (the Coal Authority) and Mr. B. Pritchard (Rhymney River Federation of Angling Clubs).

1. MINUTES - 11TH JUNE 2007

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th June 2007 were received and noted. There were no matters arising which were not dealt with during the course of the meeting.

2. WATER QUALITY UPDATE

Reference was made to the various reports that have been submitted in relation to incidents in the New Tredegar area and Ms. M. D'Onofrio referred to problems with a sewage outfall into the river and indicated that the bung (which had subsequently been illegally removed) had been installed only as a temporary measure to stop the problem and that Officers are currently examining a long term solution.

Reference was then made to problems in Deri, identified as a result of the work of the Fly Life Group, whereby manhole covers kept bursting. Investigatory works were undertaken and the appropriate works carried out on the line which will continue to be monitored.

Mr. D. Power referred to the introduction of 'hawkeyes' (telemetry lines) in combined sewerage outlets which links to the control centre at St. Mellons and gives off an alarm based on the levels within the outlet as they relate to its orifice. In the event of a high level alarm being registered, a crew are sent to the scene. Mr. Roberts referred to an incident that he had reported following a discharge of a combined sewer outlet at Mill Road, Bargoed and queried as to whether the telemetry system had logged the overflow. Mr. Power indicated that if Mr. Roberts was able to provide the incident number he would check the data but pointed out that it is not possible to respond to every alarm that its triggered by the system.

It was noted that the success of the use of the fly life and water quality monitoring techniques has proven to be a valuable asset in highlighting pollutants and will continue to be used to assist in identifying pollution sources.

3. INCIDENTS ON DATABASE

Detailed discussion ensued on the source of pollution in the vicinity of Tiryberth Industrial Estate and it was reported that the problem has been brought to the attention of the relevant company who have been issued with an Enforcement Notice requiring them to undertake necessary improvement works. Once the period of the notice has expired investigations will be undertaken to ensure that the problems had been addressed, otherwise further action will be taken as necessary. Mr Roberts referred to the powers available to the Angling Clubs/Conservation Association to prosecute offenders should the need arise.

Concerns were raised at the levels of permethrin identified in the drains around the factory over the past few months and it was noted that its life is dependent on its form. If it were a free solution its life would be short but if bound by biological substrands its life would be that much longer. Mr Walters confirmed that the Agency would continue to monitor the site and take appropriate action as required.

It was again noted that the work of the Fly Life Monitoring Team has assisted in isolating the source of the pollution. With regards to the Team, Mr. Roberts referred to his role as Area Organiser and detailed the training and events that have been organised for the volunteers and the close working relationship which has developed with the Environment Agency. The Chairman referred to the success of the Team in measuring vertebra life, its water quality monitoring techniques and its success in isolating sources of pollution and noted that the initiative has now been launched nationally.

Members were then notified of key incidents since the last meeting and specific reference was made to those at Virginia Park, Caerphilly (possible leachate from an old landfill site) and at Tiryberth (discharge) both of which were being investigated. It was noted that works were ongoing on the Nant Cylla and Mr. Power reported that the collapsed sewer has been repaired and a camera survey undertaken on the length of the sewer to ascertain where desilting works are required to be undertaken. Consideration is also being given to installing a system similar to the 'hawkeye' telemetry system in order that discharges are registered and recorded and appropriate action can be taken.

A query was then raised with regards to incidents associated with a combined sewer in Rhymney (in the vicinity of Kwik Save) and the lack of feedback received to the complainant on the action taken. Mr. Power indicated that there had been a few incidents recorded at the beginning of the year and the collapse in the line had been repaired. On this occasion there would have appeared to have been a break down in communication in advising the complainants. He then detailed the liaison between Welsh Water, the Environment Agency and Kelda Water and reiterated that when incidents are reported not all are able to be attended.

It was noted that at previous meetings a print out of the incidents recorded on the data base had been made available and Members requested that rather than a verbal update, a report should be provided in order they can view the incident details and to be more able to discuss the areas of concerns and the actions taken.

4. MINEWATER CONTAMINATION AT TIRYBERTH

In the absence of Mr. Hill, details of his report were tabled at the meeting.

It was noted that monitoring continues at Tiryberth. A ground investigation of the former ash tip next to the roundabout was carried out a few months ago and the results are in the process of being interpreted to assess the suitability of the area for the minewater reedbeds.

Investigations are also ongoing to identify the preferred access route to collect the minewater at the valley bottom and the preferred route for the pipeline to transfer the minewater from the collection point to the treatment area. Discussions to agree the pipeline easement and access rights are ongoing with the Landowners Agent. A monitoring borehole has been drilled on the other side of the road (behind the playing field) and monitoring is ongoing to assess connectivity between the borehole and the water emissions into the river.

Members noted the progress being made and that an update would be given at the next meeting.

5. CULVERT AT PONTLOTTYN

A Study has identified two potential treatment areas for the minewater which emerges approximately 220m up from the river culvert. The options are to transfer the mine water out of the culvert and:-

- (i) continue down the side of the river to an area of land on the school grounds. This solution poses significant engineering challenges to install the pipeline but would have the benefit of being a gravity flow to the treatment area or;
- (ii) construct a sump adjacent to the mouth of the river culvert and pump the minewater to an area of land over the culvert. This solution would involve pumping the minewater in perpetuity but the treatment site is closer to the minewater emission.

Member noted the progress being made and that an update would be given at the next meeting.

6. NEW TREDEGAR FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME

Mr. Hodges referred to the New Tredegar flood alleviation scheme and in noting that Mr. Scott Squires, Environment Agency, had attended a previous meeting and had outlined the scheme, it was agreed that he be invited to the next meeting to detail progress.

The meeting closed at 3pm

With regards to the query raised in relation to the Ebbw River, it has been confirmed that on the Nant Gwyddon, rear Victoria Buildings, Abercarn the local fishing club allegedly had interests in the pond but a couple or so years ago knocked a hole in the dam wall, near its bottom, which liberated conspicuous quantities of silt, overloading existing drainage with the silt and blocking culverts. It was assumed the silt was the result of mining works. It has been noted that the pond has been fenced off adequately lessening the danger to falling in but it is

not known if the dam wall repair or the impounding water or indeed if all the silt was removed.

The Local Authority used to be responsible for the monitoring of dams within the Borough but this responsibility is now with the Environment Agency, it is believed that there is no policing of ponds, where the capacity is less than 25,000cu,m (the threshold for reservoirs).