



RIVER RHYMNEY TASK GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES,
PENALLTA HOUSE ON MONDAY, 2ND NOVEMBER 2009 AT 2.00 PM

PRESENT:

Councillor R. Woodyatt - Chairman

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Councillor M.P. James, Ms. M. Sutherland, Miss. H.C. Morgan,

THE COAL AUTHORITY

Mr. S. Hill

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY WALES

Miss K. Holland, Mr. J. Goldworthy, Mr. D Walters

RHYMNEY RIVER FEDERATION OF ANGLING CLUBS

Mr. D. Couldrick and Mr. R. Williams

KELDA WATER SERVICES (WALES)

Mr. S. Churches

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M. Parker, Mr. D. Power (Kelda Water Services (Wales), Mr. D. Roberts (Rhymney River Federation of Angling Clubs), M. Johnson and A. Jones (Caerphilly County Borough Council)

1. MINUTES - 29TH JUNE 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 29th June 2009 were received and noted.

2. KELDA WATER SERVICES

Mr. S. Churches circulated a document which detailed the aims of Kelda in reducing pollution figures, increasing self reported pollution incidents and proactive combined sewer outlined maintenance. Details of the total category 1 and 2 pollution figures for 2007, 2008 and 2009 were plotted on a graph as were the category 3 figures. The self reporting statistics for 2009 were also noted.

Specific reference was made to the hawkeye telemetry lines in combined sewerage outlets which link to the control centre at St. Mellons and give 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. Churches reported that there are now 600 being monitored and detailed the criteria for the installation of the telemetry.

A query was raised on the data collected and as to whether any action is taken on those combined sewerage outlets where regular reports are being received. Mr. Churches responded by detailing the current capital funding arrangements and pointed out that whilst such combined sewerage outlets are prioritised, each would need to be carefully considered against others that have also been prioritised before works can be programmed.

3. WATER QUALITY UPDATE

Ms. Holland referred to the biological abundance report that had been presented to the previous meeting and reported that it had been intended to present the fly life data to the meeting. Unfortunately, Mr. Roberts, who had collated the data, was not able to be present. The information would be presented to the next meeting.

It was noted that SPMD cages were installed at three locations on 2nd September 2009. Deployment sites were downstream from Tafarnaubach drain in Princetown just upstream of the confluence of the Nant Melyn and Rhymney on the Nant Melyn and downstream of the confluence of the Nant Melyn and Rhymney on the Rhymney.

Unfortunately, when Environmental Monitoring Team staff returned on 5th October 2009, the SPMD cage at Tafarnaubach drain was completely dry and the cages on the Nant Melyn and Rhymney were both missing. The Nant Melyn river was dry from source to the confluence with the Rhymney river and the Rhymney itself was experiencing very low water levels following a period of dry weather. Both of the missing SPMD cages would therefore have been highly visible. Future deployments of SPMD cages at these sites need to coincide as much as possible with a prolonged period of wet weather since the cages need to be submerged for the month of deployment to gain meaningful results for permethryn.

It was noted that a report on the biological investigation of the River Rhymney from data collected on 25th February and 24th June 2009 has been prepared and would be circulated to the Group for information.

4. INCIDENTS ON DATABASE

Details of incidents reported to the Environment Agency from November 2008 - 30th January 2009 were circulated and noted. Officers present responded to queries raised on the information provided and confirmed the action being taken on each of the incidents reported

During the course of the period, three calls were logged to a combined sewerage outlet discharge blockage in the vicinity of Ambulance station, Aberbargoed. On two of those two occasions the blockage had been cleared, the outfall cleaned and the pollution ceased. On the third occasion, there was no blockage found at the time of inspection although there was evidence of a spill on the outfall which was subsequently cleared. It was noted that this specific combined sewerage outlet had now been included on the monthly monitoring schedule. It was clarified that its location makes it unsuitable for the installation of a hawkkeye telemetry line. A further incident in that area had resulted in plastic and metal signs being found in the river which were removed.

Another combined sewerage outlets discharge incident had been logged in Abertysswg (behind the school). The blockage had been cleared, the outfall cleaned and the pollution ceased.

5. MINEWATER CONTAMINATION AT TIRYBERTH

Mr. Hill reported that his discussions with the Planners and Ecologist in July had been very positive although concerns had been raised over the possible loss of two trees in order to achieve the scheme and the requirement to carry out a dormouse survey. These were being addressed.

He detailed the proposed water transfer route and the site proposed to accommodate the mine water reed beds and reported that a presentation is to be made in the next few weeks of the cost benefits of the scheme. He reminded the Group of the current economic climate and pointed out that this scheme will be carefully considered against a number of other schemes prior to any approval being given.

It was suggested that the cost benefits should also incorporate details of the proposed riverside walk and agreed that the Countryside Service provide the necessary details in order that it can be included in the submission.

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

6. CULVERT AT PONTLOTTYN

Mr. Hill confirmed that this scheme is not as far advanced as Tiryberth and referred to the protracted discussion with the landowner, and in view of the outcome, the requirement to consider an alternative route. As a result it is necessary to consider alternative proposals to enable the scheme to progress and as such consideration is being given to an option of using land on top of the culvert and putting a shaft into the contaminated mine water culvert. This scheme would use up an area which would otherwise be used for treatment purposes.

Once a scheme has been determined there will be a requirement to prepare a cost benefit analysis under the Water Framework Directive. Mr. Hill indicated that if the scheme is not successful it might be necessary to seek alternative sources of funding to enable it to proceed.

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

The meeting closed at 2.40 pm.