



RIVER RHYMNEY TASK GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE ON MONDAY 27TH SEPTEMBER 2010 AT 2.00PM

PRESENT:

Councillor R. Woodyatt - Chairman

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Councillor M.G. Parker, Ms. M. Johnson, Ms. M. Isles and Miss. H.C. Morgan

THE COAL AUTHORITY

Mr. S. Hill

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY WALES

Miss K. Holland

RHYMNEY RIVER FEDERATION OF ANGLING CLUBS

Mr. D. Roberts

KELDA WATER SERVICES (WALES)

Mr. S. Churches

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M.P. James, Mr. G. Jones, Mrs. A. Jones, Mrs. M. Dodd (Caerphilly County Borough Council), Miss F. Attwood, Mr. J. Goldworthy and Mr. D Walters, Mr. J. Goldworthy (Environment Agency Wales), Mr. D. Power (Kelda Water Services (Wales)) and Mr. P. Couldrick and Mr. R. Williams (Rhymney River Federation of Angling Clubs).

2. MINUTES - 12TH APRIL 2010

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th April 2010 were received and noted.

3. WATER QUALITY UPDATE

In the absence of Miss Attwood there was no report available but Mr. Roberts commented that it has been noticed with the last two months there has been an improvement in the single generation species invertebrate population, but it was not possible to tell at this stage whether such an improvement will continue to be maintained. He advised that the flylife monitoring

data will continue to be collected and collated and reminded those present that, to date, whilst there are variations from site to site there does not seem to be a marked improvement. While it is possible to monitor the specific sites and compare the data along the river there may be different invertebrates at the specified locations within the river and as such it was not anticipated that consistent data would be found along its length. He confirmed that there are still problems at various sites with sewage entering the river but it was noted that there have been fewer incidents reported than in previous years.

4. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY WALES SE WALES AREA MONITORING TEAM - NANT CARNO

Consideration was given to the detailed report of the Environment Agency Wales SE Area Environmental Monitoring Analysis and Reporting Team which had been discussed at the last meeting and it was noted that the water quality survey had been undertaken as a follow-up to previous investigations at locations where cypermethrin and permethrin had been traced. A large amount of work has been conducted on the River Rhymney and numerous water quality improvements have been seen over recent years.

Reference was then made to the sample surveys undertaken on the Rhymney Nant Carno catchment to determine the biological quality of the macro invertebrate fauna ecological diversity (small freshwater animal community) by using kick samples at a number of sites and to the results which had concluded that abundances were low throughout the catchment surveyed. The river flow type, clarity and substrate composition was also recorded at each site as was the presence of macrophytes, bryophytes, algae sewage fungus and sewage litter.

The report advised that whilst improvements have been seen the survey shows that there are a number of potential pollution inputs along the Nant Carno. Regular surveys which show location of poor biology is extremely useful in helping direct investigations and resources. Concerns were expressed that pollution events (particularly Di-n-butyl phthalate) whether continuous or intermittent, affect the small aquatic animals inhabiting watercourses. The effects can remain noticeable in biological samples for relatively long periods after the event.

Details of the survey methods (semi permeable membrane devices placed at a number of locations) were outlined and Members were pleased to note that the results have shown that cypermethrin and permethrin are below the detection limits for lab analysis in the Nant Melyn and River Rhymney upstream and downstream of the Nant Melyn. The results have proven that there is an improvement of water quality in the Nant Melyn and River Rhymney since the closure of a particular factory. Members were pleased to note that the survey in relation to the macro invertebrate community in the Butetown Pond outflow (site 2) does not indicate that the stream is impacted by acidification as had been suggested. No indication of diazinon, cypermetherin or flumetherin was found in the Carno in either the bryophyte sample or in the macro invertebrate fauna identified during the survey.

Members noted the conclusions and recommendation contained within the report and it was agreed that any specific comments on its content be forwarded to Miss Attwood.

5. DWR CYMRU - POSSIBLE MISCONNECTION REPORT - PENGAM, BLACKWOOD

Steve Churches (Kelda Water Services) gave a report on the investigations that had been undertaken on a possible misconnection following complaints of grey water and smell to a small watercourse on the location identified on the plan accompanying the report.

Mr. Churches reported that investigations had found the watercourse at the location to be very grey in colour but with little or no odour. However, the watercourse was tested for traces of ammonia, which proved positive, and as a result the surface water outfall from an adjacent housing estate and surface water manhole chambers were investigated. As a precaution the foul sewer which runs in parallel to the surface water sewer was also investigated and to eliminate this sewer as a source of ammonia to the surface water sewer a dye test was carried out. This involved dropping some dye into chamber ST15970205 and looking for the coloured dye in the surface water sewer and the small watercourse receiving surface water. The dye was not present in either.

The report concluded that given the tests and results there may be a misconnection to the surface water sewer which may be linked to the small group of houses in the vicinity.

In noting that the report has been referred to the county borough for action it was requested that an update be given at the next meeting.

6. INCIDENTS ON DATABASE

Details of incidents reported to the Environment Agency from 21st April - 10th August 2010 were reported and noted. Officers present responded to queries raised on the information provided and confirmed the action being taken on each of the incidents reported.

It was noted that with regards to the sewage discharge to Nant Cwm Parc (near primary school), the manhole chamber had been found to be blocked with stones and rubble which had subsequently been removed. Tarmac tipped into the Nant yr Aber (less than 1 wheelbarrow full) were found to have been pushed down the bank, but had not yet entered watercourse and had also been removed, with the assistance of Keep Wales Tidy. At the Poultry Farm, Hendredenny, building rubble and dead animals had been found in the river. The owner had removed the rubble and stones on request.

Members noted that in Bryngwyn St, Fleur-de-Lis, a company had been found washing down vehicles to surface water drains. It had been recharged and a warning letter sent. As a result the Company have now installed the appropriate infrastructure for vehicle washing. A further incident at Bryngwyn regarding the sighting of oil, foam and discolouration on the tributary of the River Rhymney was traced back to a unit on Hawtin Park Industrial Estate where a sump on site was found to be overflowing and discharging to a surface water drain. The Company drained the sump and arranged for CCTV survey of all site drainage. On Bedwas House Industrial Estate a Company had also been found to be washing down vehicles to surface water drains and it had also been recharged and warning letter sent.

Members noted that it is often difficult to prove who the offenders are, but when proven, pollution prevention advice is given and a formal warning letter issued. Any works required are recharged to the offender. If the offence is committed again and there is sufficient evidence further action will be taken. It was stressed that it is important that any incidents are reported and logged to determine whether there is a pattern.

Of those where it had not been possible to identify the source, two had been to the tributary of Nant Cylla and one at Parc Cwm Darren where grey discolouration in Nant Bargoed Rhymni Source had been reported. The pollution had ceased by time officer reached site. Similarly at The Terrace, Rhymney a grey/beige discolouration in an outfall was found to be discharging. Again it was not possible to identify the source and the pollution ceased within a couple of hours. At Western Industrial Estate, Caerphilly three roach had been found dead on the surface of lake, possibly of natural causes. At the Primary School, Penyrheol a sewage smell was reported. There was no smell at the time of

the inspection by the Environment Agency and the subsequent analysis of water samples were inconclusive.

Specific reference was also made to the combined sewer outlet discharge in New Tredegar and those present were reminded that the bung (which had subsequently been illegally removed) is still in place only as a temporary measure while Officers continue to examine a long-term solution.

During the course of the debate Mr. Roberts referred to another four incidents he was aware of that had not been listed in the report (770786/802291/802995/809056). He was advised that as they had not been substantiated the system has not selected the information and as such the data had not been incorporated. Miss Holland indicated she would enquire as to whether there were any updates available on the specific incidents and advise Mr. Roberts accordingly.

7. MINEWATER CONTAMINATION AT TIRYBERTH

Mr. Hill advised that as reported at the last meeting the design had been finalised and detailed the proposed water transfer route and the site which will accommodate the mine water reed beds. He highlighted the estimated costs and the costs analysis which have been undertaken in order to determine the feasibility and viability of the scheme. It was confirmed that as previously explained any scheme has to deliver benefits in a cost-effective way even though there may be many significant scientific, technical, planning, administrative and economic implications which have to be taken into account as part of the process. In view of the current economic climate and an unfavourable cost versus benefits assessment, the scheme still stands deferred.

Reference was made to the classification of the river (in 2008 it had been classified bad but by 2009 the classification had been changed to good) and it was queried as to whether if it were moved to a different category this would have an impact on the timeline for its implementation.

In noting that there are a number of criteria used to determine classification it was pointed out that the original draft classification in 2009 was driven by fish classification. This had been an error at that time as there are no fish monitoring sites within the waterbody. When the classification had been reassessed it was changed to good as inverts were good and water quality high. It would be necessary to undertake further environmental assessments in order to achieve any reclassification and, if successful, the project would still require to be assessed against other competing minewater remediation schemes in accordance with the Water framework Directive.

8. CULVERT AT PONTLOTTYN

Mr. Hill confirmed that not a great deal has changed since his report to the last meeting in that a formal assessment has yet to be undertaken and cost benefit analysis under the Water Framework Directive has to be prepared.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9. Discharge Entering the Nant Bargoed at New Road, Deri

Reference was made to the ongoing problems with the sewage discharge from the manhole onto the footpath and entering the Nant Bargoed at New Road, Deri and its effect on the nearby rugby pitch. Mr. Churches indicated that he would meet Mrs. Isles and representatives of the Club on site in order to view the extent of the problem.

10. Hawkeye Telemetry, Carno Street, Rhymney

Reference was made to previous incidents associated with Carno Street, Rhymney when the existing hawkeye had not triggered and it was noted that the necessary works have now been undertaken.

The meeting closed at 3pm