



RIVER RHYMNEY TASK GROUP

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES,
PENALLTA HOUSE ON MONDAY, 7TH MARCH 2011 AT 10.00 A.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor R. Woodyatt - Chairman

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Councillor M.G. Parker, Mr. G. Jones, Ms. M. Iles, Ms. M. Johnson, Ms H. Morgan

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY WALES

Miss F. Attwood, Miss K. Holland, Mr. D Walters

RHYMNEY RIVER FEDERATION OF ANGLING CLUBS

Mr. D. Couldrick, Mr. D. Roberts

KELDA WATER SERVICES (WALES)

Mr. S. Churches

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M.P. James, Mr. S. Hill (The Coal Authority), Mr. L. Keil (Welsh Water), Mr. D. Power (Kelda Water Services) and Mr. R. Williams (Rhydney Federation of Angling Clubs), Mrs. M. Dodd and Mrs. A. Jones (Caerphilly County Borough Council)

2. MINUTES - 27TH SEPTEMBER 2010

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th September 2010 were received and noted.

Matter Arising

Incidents on Database - Combined Sewer Outlet - New Tredegar (minute no. 5)

It was noted that discussions are ongoing to find a long-term solution to the problems associated with the combined sewer outlet discharge in New Tredegar.

3. WATER QUALITY UPDATE

Miss Attwood advised that there continues to be routine monitoring undertaken and she made reference to the requirement of the Water Framework Directive (designed to improve the way water bodies are managed) to ensure that such monitoring is undertaken. Regular surveys which show locations of poor biology is extremely useful in helping direct investigations and resources. Water quality surveys 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 Rhydney and numerous water quality

improvements have been seen over recent years. Data will continue to be collected, collated analysed and reported to the Group. 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.

With regard to the misconnection in the vicinity of Bargoed railway station it was noted that camera monitoring has been undertaken and the results are still awaited.

Mr. Williams advised that the Fly Life Team had undertaken monitoring sampling at sites 1, 2 and 3 over the weekend to determine the biological quality of the macro invertebrate fauna ecological diversity (small freshwater animal community) by using kick samples. Whilst there appeared to be a marked improvement in the single generation species invertebrate population in that area this had not been reflected in the samples taken downstream. He confirmed that data would continue to be collected and collated. 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.

4. INCIDENTS ON DATABASE

Details of incidents reported to the Environment Agency from 19th October 2010 to 2nd February 2011 were circulated and noted and the Officers present responded to queries raised on the information provided and confirmed the action being taken on each of the incidents reported.

With regards to an incident at High School, Pontlottyn it was noted that heavy plant operating in the River Rhymney caused large quantities of suspended solids to be released downstream. Western Power were undertaking emergency works to exposed cables on the bank and one vehicle had to enter watercourse to move gabion baskets. Pollution prevention advice and guidance was given.

There had been two reported incidents at Bargoed Ambulance Station with sewage discharging from a surface water outlet. A possible misconnection was identified and this is currently being investigated by the Environmental Health Department. Mr. Roberts advised that there has been problem associated with the site for a number of years and stated that on occasions the combined manhole at Sannon Street blocks and overflows into the storm drain which discharges into the River Rhymney near the ambulance station. Mr. Churches advised that as the chamber is shallow it is not possible to install telemetry at that point. In noting that the matter is being investigated by the Environmental Health Department it was agreed that an update would be provided at the next meeting.

Soft tissue had been the cause of a blockage down stream of High Street, Pengam and the sewage discharging to the river. The blockage had subsequently been removed and cleared. In noting that this occurs on a regular basis Mr. Churches advised that there has been a full desilt of the line and at present monthly inspections are being undertaken. An application has been submitted for hawkeye telemetry to be installed at that location.

At The Walk, Ystrad Mynach investigations of a strong smell of diesel and sheen on the Nant Cylla had found a leak of heating oil from a residential property entering the Nant Cylla via a pond. The contaminated pond water was removed, extensive ground contamination remains and surveys of land and groundwater contamination are being undertaken in order that the affected ground can be removed.

A second incident at The Walk, Ystrad Mynach had found a pipe discharging sewage to the Nant Cylla. The sewer pipe was opened up and connected back to its original point on the trunk sewer as a temporary measure. Further works are to be undertaken to provide a permanent solution.

At Glendale Farm, Fleur de Lis (downstream from Tir y Berth Industrial Estate) there was sewage leaking from the pipe going across the River Rhymney. The Crew jetted and cleared the blockage and the pollution has ceased. A recharge and warning letter has been sent.

With regards to the thick foam on the watercourse running through Fleur de Lis rugby ground, as the foaming has ceased by the time Officers arrive on site they have been unable to trace the source. The Cleaners sink in the school was dye tested for a misconnection but produced a negative result. Similar incidents in this area have been reported over the last few years and although Officers have been unsuccessful in tracing the source of the pollution they will continue to respond to incident reports received.

During the course of the debate an update was given on a project submitted by Welsh Water to undertake dye testing at Glendale Gardens and on the installation of flow monitors on stretches on the Darran Valley line.

5. MINEWATER CONTAMINATION AT TIRYBERTH/ CULVERT AT PONTLOTTYN

It was noted that due to other commitments Steve Hill was unable to attend. He had however wished it noted that monitoring is ongoing at both sites but, based on current information, any remediation schemes have been deferred, at least until post 2015.

In noting that the position within the programme is dictated by its classification and that there are a number of criteria used to determine classification (one of which is the requirement to examine the economical benefits of a scheme compared to the whole life costs), it was queried as to whether, if picnic/amenity areas were created to enhance the environment, it would change the classification into a different category, and if this was the case whether it would have an impact on the timeline for implementation.

It was agreed that an Officer from Countryside and Landscape Services and the Countryside Council for Wales be invited to the next meeting to discuss the feasibility of undertaking some environmental improvements to enhance those areas.

The meeting closed at 2.45 p.m.