



## **BRYN COMPOST LIAISON GROUP**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH  
ON TUESDAY, 21ST FEBRUARY 2017 AT 2.00 P.M.**

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PRESENT:

Councillor N. George - Chair

Councillors:

W. David, J.A. Pritchard

Together with:

Residents: Mrs G. Davies, Mr W. Griffiths, Mr G. Mahony and Mr J. Szura

Gelliargwellt Uchaf Farm (Bryn Compost): Ms J. Morgan

Natural Resources Wales: Ms C. Harvey, Mr A. Ward

Environmental Health: Miss C. Edwards

Officers: R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer), J. Tyler (Administrative Assistant)

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Angel, D. Bolter, H.W. David, G.J. Hughes, M.P. James and S. Morgan, local resident representatives Mrs A. Gray and Mrs S. Spencer, Public Health Wales representatives Mrs T. Deacon and Mr H. Brunt, and Gelliargwellt Uchaf Farm representative Mr R. Thomas.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

### **3. MINUTES – 7TH NOVEMBER 2016**

The minutes of the Bryn Compost Liaison Group meeting held on 7th November 2016 were received and noted.

#### **4. MATTERS ARISING**

Reference was made to the Composting Best Practice document which had been discussed at a number of previous meetings. Ms Caitriona Harvey from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) explained that this guidance (which was officially titled "*How to comply with your environmental permit. Additional technical guidance for: composting and aerobic treatment sector*") had been produced in draft form by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in 2013. However, a final version of the document was never published by DEFRA or the Environment Agency, although the draft version has been published online by the Association of Organics Recycling and is being widely used by the industry.

It was explained that NRW have not officially adopted this guidance and that they currently refer to a number of other documents, including "*How to comply with your environmental permit*" (published by NRW in 2014), "*An industry guide for the prevention and control of odours at biowaste processing facilities*" (published by The Composting Association in 2007), and "*The Composting Industry Code of Practice*" (published by The Composting Association in 2005). These documents are often referenced in the permits for the sites operating these types of facilities (including the Bryn Compost permit). Ms Harvey explained that it was the view of NRW that the existing guidance is sufficient in relation to composting best practice.

Members were advised that a briefing note which summarised this matter had been compiled by Natural Resources Wales and circulated to all members of the Group in December 2016. It was agreed that this information would be re-circulated to the Group following the meeting.

#### **5. UPDATE FROM NATURAL RESOURCES WALES**

The Group were referred to the overview of odour complaint data for Bryn Compost between 1st November 2016 and 31st January 2017, which illustrated the number of odour complaint calls received each month by NRW and the number of instances where composting odours were substantiated. The majority of these complaints (22 in total) were received during November, with a total of 12 complaints. The most significant number of complaints were received on 30th November, with a total of 6 complaints.

Mr Adam Ward from NRW explained that as discussed at the previous Liaison Group meeting, NRW have come to an agreement with Gelliargwellt Farm regarding Schedule 5 notifications. This has meant that over the previous 3 months, they have been submitting notifications to NRW and the Local Authority prior to a compost or farming-related activity that could cause odour emissions. This has helped inform incident response procedures to ensure the correct authority is responding to investigate.

NRW has received a total of 13 Schedule 5 notifications in the past 3 months, the majority of which were linked to farming activities. 2 notifications were related to waste activities and both were linked to IVC building maintenance. NRW received one complaint on 23rd January 2017, which may have been attributed to maintenance of the IVC (in-vessel composting) building door. NRW made a risk-based decision not to attend on this occasion.

It was noted that as NRW had not attended any complaints between November 2016 and January 2017, this should be reflected in the table of key data included in the overview of odour complaint data (which had been recorded as zero within the "Complaints Not Attended" column"). Mr Ward confirmed that this data would be amended for future reports.

A Member queried whether the composition of the farm manure that is spread across land includes a sawdust product. Ms Jennifer Morgan from Bryn Compost outlined the process, explaining that waste and bedding from the cattle sheds are processed to separate the solid

and liquid matter. The solids are spread to land and the liquid is further processed via the AD (anaerobic digestion) plant.

Reference was made to the graph within the dataset which outlined the number of complaints by street, and a query was received as to whether the home address of the complainant (rather than the location of the odour) was being recorded. It was confirmed that the location of the complainant is logged by the call centre; however if the odour is at a separate location, then this is also recorded. Mr Ward added that the particular graph included in the dataset outlines the areas where the complainants reside.

A local resident Member raised concerns regarding spreading via an “umbilical cord” located behind his house. Ms Morgan explained that this is located on land owned by Gelliargwellt Farm and that they are spreading digestate, which is a natural product. Ms Morgan stated that this product does not produce any odours.

In response to a query from the Group, Mr Ward provided clarification on the compliance bands in existence at the site. He explained that there are several areas within the facility which each fall under different bandings (with the IVC being classed under an A or B band and the compost store under a C or D band). A local resident Member referred to two recent breaches of permit conditions incurred by the operator and queried whether this could affect their banding. Mr Ward explained these breaches relate to compost storage and waste transfer procedures which could potentially lead to a drop in the compliance banding of the site from C to D, and could in turn have financial implications for the operator in the next financial year. He added that there had been no breaches of permit in relation to the IVC facility.

In closing, Mr Ward explained that the new Schedule 5 notification process is working very well in terms of providing advance notification of compost or farming-relating activities at the site. He confirmed that a significant drop in odour complaints has been noted since August 2016, and a Member of the Group also remarked on a substantial improvement in recent months.

## **6. MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

Members noted that Mr Jeff Cuthbert and Mr Gerald Reynolds had recently tendered their resignations as local resident representatives of the Bryn Compost Liaison Group, and that letters would be sent on behalf of the Group to thank them for their valued contribution to the meetings. It was agreed that arrangements to seek replacement representatives would be made in due course.

## **7. UPDATE – TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Miss Ceri Edwards (Environmental Health Manager) presented an update on this matter. At the last meeting of the Group, Members had expressed a need to look at the wider issues raised at the meetings and for the terms of reference for the Group to be reviewed and expanded to cover farming activities at the site.

Miss Edwards confirmed that following advice from the appropriate Officers, it had been established that any changes to the terms of reference of the Liaison Group have to be agreed by full Council. A report will be presented to Council in due course.

## **8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Discussion took place regarding the volume of traffic travelling to and from the Bryn Compost site, and in particular those vehicles originating from outside the county borough.

Members were reminded of the diverse nature of the operations at Gelliargwellt Farm (including recycling, composting, quarrying and farming) and that as a result, there is an expectation that vehicles will arrive from other parts of the country. Miss Edwards explained that due to some contracts at the site being commercially sensitive, she was unable to provide further information in relation to company names or types of business.

A local resident Member commented that there appeared to be an increase in heavy goods vehicles to the site and raised concerns that the volume of food/garden waste could be exceeding site limits. Miss Edwards explained that waste input is carefully regulated and monitored and that if it was found to be over the regulation limits, this would be addressed with the Operator. Mr Ward added that Bryn Compost complete quarterly waste returns and that NRW are satisfied that the operator is not exceeding their waste limits.

Reference was made to the site permit and the hours of operation at the site and a Member stated that they had received complaints from local residents regarding Sunday operating. Ms Harvey confirmed that NRW had not received any complaints in regards to the site operating on a Sunday and provided clarification on permit regulations. She explained that if the site were found to be breaching the agreed hours of operation, this would be classed as a breach of planning consent and not a breach of their permit.

Discussion took place regarding the date of the next meeting and it was agreed that arrangements would be made for it to be held after May 2017.

The meeting closed at 2.29 p.m.