



BRYN COMPOST LIAISON GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON 3RD JUNE 2014 AT 2:00 PM

PRESENT:

Councillor D. V. Poole Chair

Councillors:

A. Angel, D. Bolter, H.W. David, W. David, G.J. Hughes and J.A. Pritchard.

Together with:

Residents: Mr G. Reynolds, Mr. W. Griffiths, Mr R. Matthews, Mrs G. Davies and Mrs A. Gray.

Gelliargwellt Farm: Mr P. Colley and R. Thomas

Natural Resources Wales: Mr. J. Harrison, Mr A. Carter and Mrs E. Roe

Environmental Health: Ms C. Edwards

Officers: E. Sullivan (Democratic Services Officer), R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chair welcomed Mrs Emily Roe from Natural Resources Wales to her first meeting of the Bryn Compost Liaison Group and advised Members that Mrs Roe would be taking over the regulation of the site from Mr Alex Cater. The Chair on behalf of the Members of the Group thanked Alex for all his hard work and wished him every success in his future endeavours.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S. Morgan and Residents Mr M. Davies, Mrs P. Lapsa, Mr T. Matthews and Mrs C. Woods and from Public Health Wales Mrs M. Bowley and Mr H. Brunt.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 10th February 2014 were received and noted.

4. MATTERS ARISING

The Chair referred to the query in relation to mobile phone charges and the cost of calls to the Natural Resources Wales (NRW) incident line. It was confirmed that calls made from mobile phones to the call centre would be charged at the mobile providers standard network tariff, this was standard working practice but any further information from the NRW Call Centre in this regard would be reported back to the Group.

5. UPDATES FROM NATURAL RESOURCES WALES

Members were updated on the progress on the on going investigation into the waste volumes received at the site and noted that the findings would be presented to the NRW Enforcement Panel meeting later this month. **The Liaison Group would be informed of the outcome of those deliberations as soon as possible.**

Clarification was sought with regard to the accuracy of food waste input data from Merthyr Tydfil Borough Council and NRW confirmed that they were satisfied that the data provided was accurate. Members were advised that not all the information received could be discussed in this forum due to commercial confidentiality issues but assurance were given that a comprehensive audit of all possible data streams had been undertaken and appropriate checks and balances had been put in place to ensure the adherence to permitted input volumes.

Reassurance were given that the data used to inform the investigation had been sourced from as wide a range of sources as possible in order to get a more accurate picture of the volumes being processed. The co-mingled (food and green waste) nature of Caerphilly waste was discussed and the difficulty in mathematically calculating the volume of the individual elements noted. Concerns were expressed that the volumes being recorded were based on estimated values and could therefore skew the data set.

Members were referred to the complaints data as appended to the minutes of the last meeting and the breakdown of odour complaints received from the 1st May 2013 to the 26th May 2014.

NRW referred to a query raised at the last meeting with regard to a possible increase in the number out of hours incidents. Having revisited the data it was confirmed that there had been no significant change in reporting patterns with 50% received Monday-Friday and 50% received during evenings and weekends. There had been no increase in out of hours complaints and there was no evidence of a developing trend.

Regarding a query raised on the recording of odour incidents and in particular issues where home addresses rather than the location of the odour were being recorded. It was confirmed that both the home address and the odour location were being logged by the call centre and therefore reflected in the complaint data presented to Members. A Member expressed concern that this information was not being consistently logged and referenced calls he had made where he had been asked for his home address but not the location of the odour. **Assurances were given that requesting both sets of information should be standard working practice for the call centre, further checks would be made and the outcome of these enquiries reported back to the next meeting.**

Members were referred to the table detailing the total number of odour complaints received, complaints not attended, substantiated compost odours, farms odours, no odour detected and

compost events. NRW confirmed that resources were being targeted on site with regular site audits conducted in order to ascertain the root causes of any odour issues. Assurance were given that although the number of visits to the site had been reduced; when on site NRW were able to make recommendations and changes to site operations and proactively prevent odours rather than reacting to odour incidents once they have occurred. It was noted that the number of visits to the site had reduced but so had the number of complaints received.

The number of complaints received again showed an improvement and the complaints by location had also improved and followed a similar pattern to previous years. References were made to seasonal differences and NRW were hopeful that the improvements now being noted would continue on through the summer months.

Members referred to the number of complaints received in relation to those not attended and substantiated. Concerns were expressed that in both April and May, 13 complaints had been received and yet none had been attended and none had been substantiated. NRW confirmed that whether or not an incident was attended depended on a variety of factors, not just the number of complaints received. The geographical concentration of the complaints for instance would be a factor however all complaints were being monitored and any patterns investigated.

In order to get a clear picture of the nature of the complaints the Chair proposed that the data for a 3 month period be presented on a day by day basis as this would readily identify any concentration when captured over a limited period of time. This was unanimously agreed by Members and **NRW confirmed that they would be able to present the data for June, July and August 2014 to a meeting in September 2014.**

It was noted that as the volume of complaints had been low a programme of planned audits rather than reactive visits had been pursued by NRW in order to identify any fundamental flaws in operations and rectify them before an odour incident occurred. Members were assured that this did not mean that residents complaints were not being closely monitored. Resources were simply being realigned in order to secure the best possible outcome for residents. NRW emphasised their commitment to securing sustainable improvements at the site and confirmed that they would continue to work to current best practice, however Members were reminded that this can change and develop over time and site operations would always need to be adapted and realigned to ensure they continued to meet best practice. Reference was made to the Composting "Best Practice Document" which was currently in draft form however once published a copy would be shared with the group.

Clarification was sought the regard to progress on the development of the anaerobic digester facility the Member believed that if all odorous waste stream from the site went through the AD plan then this could lead to a reduction in odours coming from the site including those from the farm activities. Representatives from Bryn Compost confirmed this to be the case and advised that talks with companies on the development had commenced.

A Member welcomed the improvement in the reduction of odour incidents and confirmed that she had detected no odours for the last 3 months at Mountain Way, Nelson but expressed concern that should the volume of material received on site increase so would the risk of an odour incident and sought clarification as to whether the site planned to take in any other Council's waste food products. Representatives from Bryn Compost confirmed there were no such plans and advised that Caerphilly and Merthyr Tydfil Council's waste were all the site could manage at this time.

A Member reference a complaint he had received with regard to smoke/burning smell coming from the site at 6.00am on a Sunday morning. The Environmental Health Manager confirmed that she had received the complaint and would be responding to it in due course and would be happy to talk further with the Member after the meeting.

The Chair closed the meeting at 14.40pm.