

Notes of Clayton Hall Landfill Site Local Liaison Group – Town Hall, Chorley
Wednesday 28 March 2018 – 6.30pm

Present: Mark Clifford – Chair. (MCI) – Vice Chairman of Clayton Le Woods Parish Council

Steve Grieve (SG) – General Manager – Quercia
Ian McSpirit (IMcS) – Senior Operations & Technical Manager – Quercia
Tracy Pearce – Note taker – Quercia
Councillor Eric Bell (EB) – Whittle le Woods Parish Councillor
Andrew Howard (AH) – Environmental Health Officer
Matt Lynch (ML) – Lindsay Hoyle MP Office
Angela Baron (AB) – Assistant Secretary Residents’ Committee
David Clough (DC) – Residents’ Committee
Sue Clough (SC) – Residents’ Committee
John Neville (JN) – Environment Agency
Matt Crump (Mcr) – Environment Agency

Apologies: Councillor Perks
Councillor Green
Matthew Barlow (MB) – Landfill Manager – Quercia
Austen Lees (AL) – Sirius Communications
Aidy Riggot (AR) – Lancashire County Council & Parish Councillor for Euxton
Councillor Peter Wilson – Deputy Leader Chorley Borough Council
Peter Hallstone (PH) – Chorley Borough Council
Dr. John Asbury (JA) – Public Health England
Dr Sakthi Karunanithi, director of public health for Lancashire County Council

1 Welcome

MCI opened the meeting by welcoming all in attendance and noting absentees. MCI stated that minutes would be produced in provisional form for SG and MCI to agree then would be issued if agreed and published by Tuesday next week. MCI then reported on questions received from concerned residents and wished to address these at the outset by asking Quercia and the Environment Agency to give a brief response. A detailed response will be provided and issued along with the minutes of the meeting

2 Matters arising

There were no matter arising which are not covered in the agenda

3 Current Situation

The questions from MCI were as follows;

MCI – Is the cell liner to take soak away or is there risk of further contamination? SG – Yes the liner will take the soak away, the cap has been tied in and is being monitored. There’s no movement of leachate or odour through the ground.

MCI – Have we located the burning smell that some residents experience from time to time? IMcS said we have investigated and it isn't coming from site. We don't burn any material. We did smell a burning plastic smell over on the A6 at Chorley but don't know the source. JN confirmed that there is no burning of any material on site, we have witnessed fires at the golf club.

MCI – Are you 100% sure the capped area was the cause of the smell? SG – fairly sure, through monitoring on site we can see odour levels reducing considerably.

MCI – in the beginning the reason for the smell was a result of cutting in for the road. The area capped is far greater than this why was this? IMcS – we capped the larger area to give a better chance of containing the odour and to give an effective seal. It was a small patch initially but by going bigger we're more confident about the area in future.

MCI – some residents have asked about the chimney you have on site? IMcS – I will provide a written explanation as to why we have that structures like that on site. I can see how that might give the impression of burning on site. (Action IMcS)

EB said that over the years we have had problems with seagulls and flies that come in to feed on the rotting waste, is this going to be the case when tipping commences in April? SG advised that a mix of industrial and domestic waste will be accepted under the conditions of the permit which also states that waste must be covered over at the end of the day to prevent vermin.

MCI – if Quercia knew about the gas why cut into the landfill? IMcS stated that investigations were carried out beforehand and the EA notified. Approximately, two thirds of the road had been constructed before any smell was noticed, we were caught by surprise by the waste type in the final third and had to react.

MCI – in the long-term strategy is LCC going to allow you carry on dumping or close? SG replied our first step is to comply with the permit and once we have achieved that then we will look at our longer-term plans.

MCI then turned to the questions asked of the EA

MCI – asked the EA about the gases that had been released and if any others had been detected. JN said that the plan was that all the information would be available to be released tomorrow. The data had been taking at 5 min time intervals, the gases detected were methane and Hydrogen sulphide.

DC asked for this information and the EA are to send the lengthy spreadsheet with all data.

MCI – the lady who moved out had a question as to whether the foul smell was from dead animals, rotting carcasses etc. and were any animals dumped during the foot and mouth. IMcS said there has never been any waste from BSE or the Foot and mouth outbreaks.

MCI – asked the EA if they could share the improvement plan with Quercia? MCr replied that the EA will be working with Quercia over the coming weeks/months on the plans and the company are due to send through a timetable of the various issues to be addressed. It may be that Quercia could release details later, however, it is not the EA's policy to release this sort of regulatory reporting.

MCI said that completed the questions and now asked for an update on the progress on site.

3.1 Progress On Site and Odour Monitoring Results

IMcS replied that the temporary cap has been installed and the EA were notified on 23rd March. The edges have been sealed and we are monitoring by instrumentation and smell for low levels. We are now carrying out more formal on and off site monitoring and will continue to do so, and will be more proactive regarding our results and liaison with local residents.

EB said it was still quite smelly on Tuesday why was this? IMcS stated that a small repair was required to the plastic cap.

DC said the smell was bad again on Saturday, why was this? IMcS replied that after the work had been carried out a short section of clay was drying out, and this is where the odour seeped out. A better quality clay was placed over in order to form better seal.

EB asked if wildlife could damage the cap? Does the plastic tear easily? IMcS said that the plastic membrane is 0.75mm thick and would not be damaged by wildlife – foxes, gulls etc.

After some discussion ML and MCI then asked IMcS to release the specification of the materials used to line the cell and provide photos and maybe a video showing its robustness.
(Action IMcS)

DC then asked if the area is inspected regularly? IMcS stated that the area of capping is inspected at least every 2 hours.

MCI felt that the liaison group should be mindful about the risk of raising resident's expectations regarding the odour being completely eliminated once the cap is completed. We need to avoid raising people's expectations at all costs and be careful about the language we use as a group.

SC commented that the smell on Saturday was the not the nasty eggy smell. SG advised that the rotten egg smell we feel can be eliminated but general odour from the waste cannot.

MCI further commented that the residents want dates and timescales but we need to be careful about the information provided so as not to raise hopes and concerns.

MCI then asked if we could move onto the monitoring regimes.

As advised earlier SG confirmed Quercia is putting in place a monitoring regime which will be 2x daily checks around the perimeter of the site and around the different communities, and when we begin to take in waste monitoring will continue.

EB asked if the cap is to be monitored by the EA? MCr said that the EA inspected the site on Monday and signed off the cap as being satisfactorily completed. We did odour monitoring with both fixed and hand held and found reduced levels. We did pick up a blip on Saturday

which was 106 ppb. We are going to continue monitoring for a longer period – 6 months beyond May. We have to understand wind directions, pressure. There is higher level of H2S when wind is certain direction.

3.2 Complaints

Complaints are gradually reducing from last Thursday we had 20- Fri 24 – Sat/Sun 49 – Sun 39 – Mon 15 - Tues – 7 -Wed 3. We don't think everything is sorted yet but it is going in the right direction. There is a survey on line by Public Health England (PHE) and I would encourage people to complete, when we checked this on Friday morning just over 1000 had done so.

3.3 PHE Health Survey

AB informed the group that PHE had a technical issue with the link. MCr advised that he had no knowledge of a problem but would like details of problems so he can advise the Multi-Agency Group when it meets tomorrow.

4. Communications

Should the odour situation continue to improve the MAG will decide whether to continue beyond its next meeting on 13th March.

ML commented that we got your update at about 5pm on Friday. At this time most people have shut down PC's, surely it would be better to send any info out a little earlier, or an email warning that information might come through later that day.

JN said that is something we would like to address and we will take on board.

(Action MCr/JN)

MCI then asked the Social Media Action Group for comment.

AB added that there was not a lot to say. MCI added that it is important to correct false information i.e. the burning smell as well as to provide factually correct information.

Returning to the issue of the plastic membrane cap, ML added that the best way to show local residents what has been done would be simple visual diagrams 'this is the cap etc.' MCI thought that whilst that would be good for some it could inflame others.

ML suggested a video, again something simple demonstrating how tough the liner is, that way instilling confidence. IMcS is to speak to Terra Consult about diagrams and give details of manufacturer's specification. SG to look into video information. (Action SG/IMcS)

EB said that in his view it will take a long time before people regain confidence in Quercia, and believe the work has been completed. ML agreed and said it is Quercia's responsibility to regain confidence.

MCI also agreed a video would be useful.

MCI asked Quercia what progress had been made since the last meeting. SG reiterated that his objective was to reach all residents either through parish council newsletters, the press itself or other methods. Since the last meeting we included a note in the Clayton Le Woods newsletter and the Chorley Citizen as a starting point.

SC added that the Chorley Citizen isn't distributed like it used to be. ML said the Chorley Guardian may have been better, and would have then been included in the Leyland Guardian too. He also added that Radio Lancashire and Rock FM are probably the best ways of getting updates out there.

SG responded that we are trying to target specific areas rather than blanket coverage.

ML & EB then added that a leaflet drop would be the best guaranteed way to target audiences. SG said he would research and report back. EB confirmed a similar note would appear in the next Whittle Le Woods newsletter.

5.0 Future Plans

MCI advised the group of the continuing regulatory controls and going forward, the steps that Quercia need to consider. They should focus on the landfill gas present now and maintain the gas infrastructure to ensure gas collection improves. Other steps are included in the gas review and the EA will work with Quercia to see this through and have made it high priority as part of the site's development.

SG stated that Quercia acknowledge the need for further improvements and will tackle actions on a staged basis. Some now, some medium term and some long term. At the end of the process the site will be in better condition, improved in a structured way. I have been asked by the Board to re-evaluate the long-term position and this will be fed to this group.

MCI said that one of the big concerns for the residents is that the summer months are coming and they're worried that they will not be able to sit out. SG felt that the company has implemented a first stage solution and will continue to make improvements. There have been blips but ultimately, we feel it will be successful. Looking back before November, as I understand it, there was no real problem from odour.

MCI countered and said there have been previous problems around Spring and Higher Meadow.

EB asked if there has been something as severe as this at other landfills. IMcS responded by saying that he couldn't comment for the EA but there are many other sites which have had the same issue, and we have drawn on their experience and taken their input along with Terra Consult to find solutions to our problem.

JN agreed that there were other landfills that have had the same problem. The difficult thing is that there is no quick solution. Wells would ordinarily reduce gas escape, they didn't. Extra capping was required and we have had to draw on knowledge from these other sites. Another thing to add also is the location of the site. There are not many landfills in urban areas like this; normally they in more rural locations. Here the site is surrounded by towns/communities.

MCI referred back to November when a cap was discussed on site and asked why was it not done then?

SG could not answer personally, however, it was likely that Quercia considered that the wells would deal with the problem. Clearly, that did not happen so the capping was necessary.

SC said the frustrating thing was that there was no communication as to what had failed. SG acknowledged the frustration but he suggested that the previous General Manger, Hugh Stewart, was in the process of leaving at the time and no-one picked up that responsibility. I was called in to add my experience and support to the existing team. It was never an issue for the Board to invest in a solution but the issue needed managing.

6.0 Community Support

Regarding local initiatives MCI indicated that many of the residents most affected backed up by the EA gas readings were to the west of the site in Clayton Le Woods and there is a playground that needs attention, is that something you would help towards? SG suggested that this was the type of project that would qualify for support under the Landfill Communities Fund and the company is currently directing funds to the Lancashire Wildlife Trust.

MCI declared an interest in the Lancashire Wildlife Trust and asked if this would be a decision by the board or would this be coming from any profits? MCI stated current beneficiaries should not lose out and new funding sought from Quercia profits. Regarding funding coming from profits SG stated that he would need to ask the board if from landfill tax then he would need to research existing processes. EB also wanted Quercia to consider other neighbourhood schemes for instance a local garden is looking to some raised beds in and this would put out a good message rather than a bad one.

ML felt that we have to step back, the first priority is establishing a clear communications path to all potential beneficiaries. A wide area has been affected here as far as South Ribble.

SG considered it shouldn't be Quercia who govern who gets what. The best way was for representatives to express an interest in receiving funding for a specific project. It has to be a fair and transparent process and spread across all areas, dialogue is the key.

ML said that South Ribble/Buckshaw don't have a Parish Council and certain parts of Leyland have not been approached by PHE regarding the survey.

SG indicated that the funds would be limited and criteria led. Qualifying projects initially must meet the criteria set by Quercia and then the representatives of local groups.

MCI proposed the next meeting in 2 weeks' time, same time same venue - all agreed.

The meeting closed at 8:00pm.

