

Rookery South CLP Meeting 17 Draft Notes
Monday 26th April 2021 – 6.30 pm
via Zoom

Present

CLP Members – Representatives from Marston Moretaine PC; Brogborough PC; Millbrook PM; Wootton PC; Marston Vale Trust; Lidlington Resident; Houghton Conquest PC; Cllr. Sue Clark (SC)

Observers/Presenters – Covanta/Rookery South Ltd: Judith Harper (JH), Neil Grimstone (NG), David Spencer (DS) Ian Judd (IJ); Chris Barbour (ChB), HZI; Kirsteen Harrison (Environmental Consultant); Environment Agency: Emma d’Avilar (Ed’A); Neil Goudie (NGd); CBC: Anita Taylor (AT); Veolia - Jacob Hall (JaH)

Facilitator: Bob Fisher (rmpfisher77@gmail.com)

Apologies for Absence: Cllr Tim Hill; Roy Romans (CBC); Jon Shortland; Ian Morrish; Lidlington PC

NOTES FROM THE MEETING

1. Introductions/CLP Ground Rules and Apologies (5 mins – BF)

BF: To reflect the discussion that's gone on recently about issues relating to commissioning, item 4 has been moved the agenda to allow CLP members the opportunity to have a discussion and put their questions relating hot commissioning tests and so on.

BF introduced Kirsteen Harrison, an environmental consultant, who had been invited by Covanta to contribute to the meeting. Also, Chris Barbour from HZI. BF invited DS to elaborate a little on IM absence.

DS reported that IM has been offered and accepted a senior management role with a waste management business based in the northeast. All at Covanta, and RSL recognize this is a wonderful opportunity for IM and wish him every success for the future. Neil Grimstone has agreed to take over his duties, while the Rookery South team recruit for a new general manager.

Many CLP Members will know that NG has been with the project for well over a decade and brings with him significant knowledge and experience, which would be a great asset for the project. In the meantime, the RSL team would like to keep the CLP membership updated as soon as the new general manager has been appointed.

- Participants were reminded of the set of ground rules originally agreed by meeting participants and, protocols for conducting meetings via Zoom were reiterated

2. Approval of notes from meeting 16

The notes had been circulated in advance of the meeting. No comments re accuracy were raised. The notes were approved.

3. Updates, including hot commissioning

JS handed over to Chris Barbour (ChB), who had been invited to talk to members about the recent odour issues affecting the plant during hot commissioning activities on 15th April.

ChB briefly summarised the hot commissioning activities, which include heating up the boilers as part of the cleaning process. Part of this process involves heating up an insulation composed of a plant-based binder to 150°C or so, at which point the binder starts to decompose over a short period of time. This decomposition produces quite a strong odour and, unfortunately, this extended to the surrounding communities. ChB expressed his apologies and acknowledged that, while local people were notified about the visual aspects of these tests, there had perhaps been less clarity or detail about the odours.

ChB further noted that the Rookery South team had looked into what had been different in this case compared to other plants and has developed a series of mitigation methods. The team has tested boiler lines 1 and 2 and intended to provide information to everyone about boiler line 3 on 28/4/21 and these mitigation methods will be implemented so this problem will not happen again.

ChB was also keen to point out that the emissions from this plant-based binder are *not* hazardous to health; it is produced purely during commissioning activities and not standard operations of the plant. Unfortunately, the odour has been slightly stronger than in previous cases, but ChB assured members that RSL would fix this for the testing on the 28th April. In summary, it's related to the temperature and the start-up of the plant. Instead of increasing the temperature sharply, with line 3 temperature will be increased slowly until the boiler reaches 150 °C. As this decomposition will occur over a longer period of time, it will be possible to control it. The building is being closed off and installed with carbon filters, so the air can be drawn out in a controlled manner to reduce the smell.

It has also been agreed that HZI/RSL will do a letter drop, which people should receive on 27/4/21. This will cover all the aforementioned information, to make people aware that there is nothing hazardous about the process, that it will be controlled and that the period will be extended so as to prevent a repeat of the earlier issues. Once again, ChB apologised and noted that he'd been involved in 3-4 similar plants which had produced a similar odour but accepted it had not been as strong as on this occasion and was not a common occurrence.

Q&A

Q: Millbrook PC asked whether the plant-based binders were in the stack – and also what their function was.

ChB explained that the boiler was insulated with a material, like rockwool such as you might find within your walls at home and that the odour was not coming out of the chimney; the

smell was actually coming out via the main building – from the boiler coating. The insulation essentially contains a plant-based polymer to bind it together. By illustration, it's similar to when you turn on an electric fire for the first time and a smell is produced, which then quickly dissipates. The key point is that this will not occur after commissioning is complete.

He added that HZI had brought in a specialist who would be going round the receptors monitoring for smell. This had not been set up before, as these issues had not been expected; but, if something does happen, they will be able to deal with it.

Q: SC asked how extensive the mail drop would be and who would receive it.

ChB said it would be sent to the local area, including houses in Stewartby, Marston and so on – within a certain radius around the plant.

DS added that the distribution list included all Pilling Farm residents and near neighbours, all local Councillors, Stewartby PC, the CLP; also, CBC and BBC would be updated. The headteacher and principal at Broadmead Lower School, Kimberley College, the Forest Centre and Stewartby Water Sports Club will receive copies of the letter.

SC noted that there had been a complaint about the smell in Lidlington, which indicates the smell went quite a long way last time. It does seem, therefore, that this is quite a small circle of people being notified.

DS pointed out that the letter was being sent out to CLP members, so if it is felt that others should receive the mail shot, this is an opportunity which could be used.

ChB said he was happy to extend the mail drop as appropriate.

Q: Wootton PC asked where the HZI information about there being no ill effects to health had come from and how old it was. Also, the EA had commented at a prior meeting, that emissions would disseminate at X hundred ft above the stack and would not be noticed – however, in this instance, they clearly had been noticed.

ChB pointed out that, in general operations, everything would go through the emissions management system, through the stack. In this case, however, it was *not* going through the stack, but within the building itself, from the Boiler Hall. This is related purely to short-term commissioning activities. With regard to the information about the binding, the material used is standard and selected for its high score from a BREEAM* perspective. It is not considered to be a hazardous substance and has been selected because it is the best performing material in terms of the environment.

*[Note: BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) is an international scheme that provides independent third-party certification of the assessment of the sustainability performance of individual buildings].

Wootton PC felt it would be better had this information been included in the note that was issued [prior to the event].

ChB appreciated this feedback and assured members that he'd spoken to specialists from the company which produces it; they guarantee the material and have data sheets which indicate that it is inert.

Q: Lidlington Resident wished to check her understanding regarding the high-spec filters at the plant – was it the case that the vapour in the commissioning tests was not coming out of the chimneys.

ChB confirmed this, explaining that the boiler is like a box inside the plant. The boiler is clad to preserve the heat inside it. When the three boilers heat up, the vapour starts to disperse inside the building and dissipates through louvers in the roof. This time, the louvres will be closed and a filter chamber will be set up with carbon filters. The dispersal of the vapour will be slowed down and it will be controlled within the building, rather than escaping into the environment.

However, when waste is burned, emissions go through the stack and the filters and is monitored for emissions – everything is checked.

Q: Lidlington Resident asked what was coming out of the chimney – it appeared to be black smoke.

ChB said that, in this case, the primary and secondary air would be running to help with the circulation and that this would be pulling some of that material up through the chimney – but not a great deal of it. The majority of the output would be through the building.

Q: Lidlington Resident asked what the nature of this output was.

ChB said that it was this plant-based binder – a resin, essentially – like the insulation which can be found within the walls of a house. When the temperature reaches 150 °C – and rises further to 400-600 °C – in the first run, this turns into vapour and starts to be released.

Q: Lidlington Resident asked whether this output was harmful to human health.

ChB responded by saying it was not.

Q: Lidlington Resident asked why the smoke was going horizontally rather than vertically.

ChB explained that the discharge came from the stack and should rise vertically, but again, this was not an operational release and so the vapour was being blown by the wind. He reiterated that this was not something which would usually be seen in operations; it had occurred only on this occasion and only for a short period of time.

Q: Lidlington Resident asked whether it would not be visible – or whether it would not be going horizontally.

ChB described how, in this process, when the boiler is heated up, once the vapour has come off over a 24-hour period, that would be it. This would not happen every time you heat up the boiler; it only happens once.

Q: Lidlington Resident asked whether this meant that nothing would come out of the chimney on a day-to-day basis.

ChB noted that there would be vapour coming out of the chimney, but *not* the odour. What was happening now was purely from the commissioning phase and therefore completely different. What comes out of the stack would all be monitored, and emissions checked.

Q: Lidlington Resident asked whether future emissions would be similarly affected by the wind – and if not, why not.

ChB said he did not expect this to be the case. Given the design and height of the stack, in operation, emissions will continue to rise up the stack, as the design intended. The odour in this case had been blown by the wind because the escape wasn't part of the operating design. It occurred purely in this commissioning phase.

Q: Lidlington Resident asked about the video on You Tube and whether this had been circulated.

JH said it had been circulated by BF, but that it had subsequently been taken down [from YouTube].

Q: Lidlington Resident noted that, given that this was a commissioning exercise, apparently no manager had been on duty on the evening this occurred, and people had no one to raise the issue with.

ChB stated that the Commissioning Manager had been on site and that there was always a Senior Shift Team Leader on site. The website has contact details and a number is provided. Normally he would be available any time through the night when he is on call to answer any queries. He said he would look into this.

Q: Lidlington Resident observed that, as a resident of Lidlington, she had received no communication about what was happening on the 28th.

ChB reminded members that the letter would not be issued until the 27th April. With regard to DS's statement earlier, the mail drop would need to be expanded – i.e. to all CLP members – so that the information can be widely disseminated. He assured her he would look into expanding the distribution list.

Q: Lidlington Resident felt this was perhaps a bit late, especially as she would be working on that day.

ChB accepted this point and wondered whether the information could be posted on the website.

DS stated that the letter was being uploaded on to the RSL website and that after the meeting he would ask BF to distribute it to all CLP members. He also confirmed that ChB's number was on the newsletter, along with the project's contact address and that the website contained the same information.

Q: Marston Moretaine PP raised two points. First, he was surprised by the number of parishioners who had known nothing about this; he'd informed them that they had received a newsletter – which had also been put on the Parish Council newsletter – but the message appeared not to have got through in the area around the site. Secondly, he was aware of

three people in the area who had complained about asthma attacks, including one who had had to ring 111 for advice – CM asked whether this was just coincidental.

ChB acknowledged that this was unfortunate. However, there was nothing from the current data sheets to indicate anything likely to cause asthma.

The Marston Moretaine member had explained to parishioners that this was not a normal/operational running condition but noted that some people believed that this would be happening every day during the operational phase. He requested that the next communication would need to make this very clear.

DS Agreed to issue this letter to all parish clerks in April to ensure this.

Q: Stewartby PC observed that Marston Vale Middle School had not appeared on the mailing list.

DS promised to check the list and make sure that they were included.

Q: Houghton PC understood all that had been said about the lagging around the boiler being the cause of the smell. However, he asked whether anyone had been looking at the concentration where this affected local people. He noted that, as the area is in a natural bowl, any sort of emission will be concentrated where it falls. He asked whether it could be determined – in this instance – where the smell was most concentrated and whether this was likely to happen with regard to anything that comes out of the incinerator in the future.

ChB replied that it could not, in his experience, and observed that the vapour/decomposing binding material came out of the building at a different height.

Houghton PC wished to confirm whether, in operation, there will be the same concentrations in the same areas. The geography of the local area has been an important factor from the start of the project, in the sense that the topography and prevailing conditions will determine where the emissions will fall.

ChB referred to the original design and height of the stack, in relation to the building and the local topography of the area. All of this will have been taken into account to avoid such things happening.

Houghton PC suggested that this was all based on estimates and modelling – which he took issue with. He would like to know whether anyone would be reflecting on this event in order to determine whether there would be a similar occurrence when the plant was operational.

ChB noted that the plant would be constantly monitored – by Hitachi prior to operations and by RSL after that. In addition, the Rookery team will be looking at how to improve or change anything should there be any issues. He reiterated that this event was not common, that the team has considered the mitigation factors and will fix it – and the same would apply to any plants in the future. He then gave an example of a plant in Glasgow where something similar had occurred and there had been no issues since and added that he would not expect there to be any correlation between what happened recently and what will eventually come out of the stack.

Q: BACI noted that it appeared the plant hadn't been prepared to implement these mitigation measures, as testing of Line 3 had been delayed. She asked what the difference was between the Rookery South incinerator and the occasion at the previous plant that led to these measures.

ChB explained that inside the boiler there is a refractory lining, which is very similar to the bricks inside night storage heaters. In previous plants, during the hot commissioning process they have turned on the oil-fired burners for commissioning to create the heat for the boiler; they go through a slow refractory drying-out process over a longer period of time that allows the binder to decompose slowly; the difference in this plant was that the refractory was already dry which enabled the temperature to be raised more quickly. However, in this instance, they failed to realise that this would compound the amount of vapour produced.

Q: BACI asked if that was because HZI/RSL had sourced these materials during a pandemic and whether the materials were in any way different from those which were normally used.

ChB stressed that it was the period of time involved which was different. On this occasion, there had been enough time for the refractory – essentially like a tile or brick, with a concrete in-fill in between – to dry out naturally. Ultimately, the team hadn't made that correlation – this had been a new and unexpected issue.

4. Actions from last meeting including previous Q&A

- **Removal of bottom ash and fly ash including types and numbers of lorries**

NG – Bottom Ash is being managed/collected for RSL by Johnson's Aggregates, from Ilkeston, Derbyshire. They will be sending in an average of 22 trucks per day and using open trucks for loading and then covering them so the bottom ash cannot escape. RSL will be using a third-party accredited contractor for the transport, so it won't be Johnson's trucks coming in. On the air pollution control residues, quantities will be much less – around 3 per day and they will go out in sealed powder tankers which will be operated by Lomas Transport, the main contractor for this material in the UK.

- **Rail issues - including the possible use of railway sidings & EWR plans**

With regard to Rail Sidings, **NG** noted that the railway sidings to the north of Rookery South are potentially available but that currently there isn't a commercially viable application for using the sidings, although RSL will continue to look at use of the sidings both for bringing waste in and also taking IBA (bottom ash) out.

Q: Stewartby PC asked whether RSL were aware that Cloud Wing are planning to build 1000 houses near these sidings.

NG wasn't aware that Cloud Wing were planning to build on the sidings.

Stewartby PC noted that they were planning to build beside the sidings on both sides, across the road, all the way down to Kempston Hardwick.

NG confirmed that RSL were talking to Cloud Wing and was aware of them being a potential heat off-taker should the houses get built.

Stewartby PC pointed out that, when he met with Cloud Wing he was surprised to learn that Cloud Wing were negotiating the possible use of the sidings. He was also surprised about bottom ash removal because, if RSL used the sidings, the transport in and out and would affect the outskirts of the housing estate and also Kimberley College.

NG felt it would be very unlikely that RSL would move the bottom ash by rail, because where they are sending it to does not have rail access. Since Rookery is just off the M1, it would make more sense to transport it by road. If RSL had sufficient volume of waste coming in, it would resurrect the idea of building its own rail siding behind the plant. Realistically, however, the cost would be £10-15 million and so it would have to be commercially viable.

Q: Stewartby PC asked, with the new EWR proposal, which has to be in by June – and into BBC by mid-May – whether there had been any consultation regarding the road. This is because Green Lane Level Crossing is being closed as part of the level crossing closures and a bridge being put in. One of the two proposed routes to enter the site will affect Stewartby a great deal as it will be coming in over Green Lane and the only other way would be for it to go on Stewartby Way itself, then a sharp left into a proposed building site and then go out under the bridge. Alternatively, one would come down the slope and down Churchill Close, which is currently houses and further down there are the school playing fields. Where, therefore, do RSL intend to turn right into the site?

NG said that RSL had not been notified of any change to the plan. Whatever new roads go in, he expected that the level crossing would remain to allow vehicles to arrive at the site.

Stewartby PC advised RSL to check this and noted that the barrier would be closed 45 minutes in every hour to allow anything up to 6-12 trains to go through. He felt there needed to be a concerted effort by everyone to find out what EWR were doing, because they are shutting down Broadmead and Manor Road [Level crossings] and putting bridges there.

NG noted this and was grateful for the information. He added that RSL was in regular contact with Network Rail with regard to the line, but this hadn't been mentioned. RSL would certainly follow this up.

Stewartby PC asked whether there could be an update on this for the next meeting and NG confirmed this would be done.

Millbrook PC noted that p 208 of EWR's technical summary clearly shows where they want to put a bridge and how they would put a separate access road in for Covanta, which did indeed look like quite a sharp turn.

Stewartby PC added that pp 100-106 show how it affects the movements at Stewartby Station from its current position, up towards Broadmead Road, to enable more trains to stop at Stewartby.

This was noted by **NG**.

- **Supply of heat & power locally by RSL**

NG noted that RSL's position on the supply of heat and power locally was that its business is Energy from Waste and as such was happy to consider heat off-take opportunities. RSL will identify a heat off-take partner, who will explore, develop and market the heat from the plant for the surrounding area – for residential or commercial users, schools or horticultural applications. RSL is very close to selecting the heat off-take partner and they will take care of this activity.

Q: Wootton PC asked whether the loading of ash onto the Johnson's lorries was done inside a covered facility.

NG said it would be – RSL has an Ash Shed, which is an enclosed building adjacent to the plant and the trucks will come in there, be loaded inside, covered and will then leave.

Wootton PC asked whether the covers were canvas.

NG confirmed that it was just a cover over the top because it was non-hazardous material.

Stewartby PC was concerned that both bottom and fly ash had a toxicity of 2%.

NG stated that the bottom ash was not toxic and added that all the bottom ash would be recycled; it would either be recovered as metal or used as an aggregate material in construction.

5. Site Updates

- **Construction**

JS noted that the external appearance of the plant in April 2021 is not changing as much as it did in 2020. The main structures are now complete and cladding installation from west to east is progressing well. Most of the activity since Christmas had been inside. The Administration Building, Control Room and offices are now complete, as is the installation of all the process equipment. Most of the construction work is internal, such as the lighting and there is still electrical testing to complete.

JS observed that the main change outside the facility would be the commencement of landscaping work; for example, the green wall had now been installed and there would be trees around the plant in the next planting season.

JS noted that RSL had completed more than 2.5 million hours and continued to abide by Covid-19 protocols. He then ran through the commissioning update [see slide re *Cold & Hot Commissioning*], some of which had been covered by ChB earlier. Examples of cold commissioning include flushing the boilers with water to clean them and testing signals from the main plant Control Room and equipment in the facility. After boil-out, the next hot commissioning activity would be steam blowing, which may be seen and/or heard outside the plant. However, **JS** pointed out that RSL is not permitted to steam blow overnight or at the weekend as per the planning permission.

The last point was an update on first waste deliveries (see slide), which are expected in May and the first waste fire in late May/early June and that's when waste will be introduced into the facility and processed in the boilers, as opposed to the fuel oil or diesel currently being used by HZI.

Following commissioning will be the testing phase, at which point the facility will have been proven to operate as intended, during which HZI will conduct a reliability run and subject to that successful test, the facility will go into commercial operations and be handed over to the O&M team from Covanta.

Q: Stewartby PC asked how many lorry movements the first waste deliveries would consist of in May.

JS advised that Veolia would provide that information in their presentation, but it would increase from a relatively small number as the facility demands more waste.

Q: Wootton PC asked when the emissions monitoring systems (EMS) would be active.

JS explained that the EMS have been through a period of installation and cold commissioning. They need to be active prior to introducing any waste on to the site, before there's any possibility of generating the flue gas which might contain any of the emissions or particulates which are allowed by the Environmental Permit. That is subject to a staged period of commissioning and testing, which was outlined in one of the pre-operations conditions to the EA.

- **Operations Update**

IJ summarised the recent, current and future recruitment and selection activities at the plant (see slide). The O&M team have had a successful recruitment period and the operations team, which is a 30-man team, is complete. They have recruited some really strong individuals with the depth of experience in large process plant energy from waste and power stations. Covanta has also recruited heavily in the maintenance team now and is in the final stage of recruitment for two mechanical technicians. There is a full team of ECU Technicians and have recently recruited a health and safety manager from the oil and gas industry. Looking ahead, they are currently seeking a Procurement Specialist, Site Administrator and Environmental Manager. Kirsteen Harrison - an environmental consultant - is supporting the team through the site development, but also through commissioning and she will support the team through the recruitment of that Environmental Manager.

Other updates include the successful completion of the initial plant training, which kicks off the next round of Covanta O&M training (see slide). The team is also in the initial stages of developing the Maintenance Management System ready for commercial handover; they have started accepting the spare parts for the plant and transferring them across into maintenance control. They have successfully completed the environmental PPC training, not only for Hitachi (HZI) but also for Covanta's own operations and maintenance. The 'first waste' project is near completion, which means they can operate the weighbridge the tipping hall cranes and to do that RSL has procured large mobile plant that's now been

delivered to site. The team is now in the final stages of preparation for that first waste delivery.

- **Veolia/Transport Update**

JaH reported no change from the previous meeting (see slide re Waste Locations). All four major supplier contracts are now in place and have started as of 1st April. The remainder of the materials will come from Veolia's own transfer stations (see slide bottom left), operating on a distance principle, with those sites nearest the plant being given priority.

With regard to vehicle movements, these will start off with relatively few – 10-20 per day initially – just to test the site and make sure everything is working operationally. This will be from the end of May/beginning of June. Deliveries will slowly increase through June and early July (see slide RHS). At its height, there will be between 100 – 150 deliveries of material per day. However, these will not be 100-150 individual vehicles but will be on turnaround throughout the day to help space deliveries and also to reduce the distance material is travelling.

6. Community & Stakeholder Engagement.

DS stated that RSL was going to try and keep the CLP informed of stakeholder engagement activities and meetings with local groups, colleges, schools and so on. Between January and April there have been a dozen meetings, including the Milton Keynes College, Kimberley College and Cranfield University.

Regarding the colleges, they were focused in on talking about STEM subjects and how RSL can support those colleges, to help students progress in their courses, and for Cranfield they've looked at how to tie into their Masters' and PhD courses, with the students and undergraduates on those particular subjects. RSL is also engaging with local business communities as well. For example, the team met with the Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce. RSL has joined alongside HZI as members of the Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce.

RSL has also given a further update presentation to the Bedford Civil Engineering Society - this is the second presentation, and they are trying to do them annually, to give a regular update to them about progress on site and answering any questions.

In terms of the local community and recreation groups, RSL has met with the Wixams Events Teams, Stewartby Water Sports Club, and the out-going High Sheriff of Bedfordshire, Susan Lousada. These are all introductory meetings to find out how RSL can support the Community as the plant progresses into the operations phase. They have also been active with local government, with Central Bedfordshire, Bedford Borough and met with parish councils as well, for example from Marston Moretaine parish council, where they had a good meeting with them, not so long ago.

RSL also met with Cllr Tim Hill and **DS** was very grateful to Tim, who has graciously offered to put recruitment positions on his Facebook feed as well, which is very helpful to advertise jobs to local audiences. They have also been meeting with Central Bedfordshire and Bedford

Borough Councils waste teams and have a point of contact for future waste deliveries and contracts of that type.

DS also wanted to give an update that the latest recording of the construction film is also available on the project's website but added that they will be reducing the frequency of them, because a lot of the activities, as JS described earlier on, on the external face of the building have now ceased and more internal commissioning taking place.

7. Regulator and Local Authority Feedback

BF noted there was a widespread desire for PHE to attend the meeting but, as CLP members were aware, they had declined to attend. **Ed'A** and **NGd** would therefore comment on this and any other matters pertaining to the EA.

NGd noted that the EA had been engaging with PHE during the commissioning period, although the latter do have higher priorities at the moment. PHE provided a statement to BF in which they explained their role and, clearly, they are happy to offer advice and guidance to the regulator, but probably not resourced to attend these types of meetings. It was agreed that the PHE will be updated on a regular basis on any issues which might occur and if there is any extraordinary event, the EA will make them aware. The EA made PHE aware of the recent odour issue, because of public interest and also to be clear that health impacts are minimal, whilst causing annoyance, through the odour rather than the chemical itself.

NGd referred to the binding, which is essentially a starch-based compound. When it breaks down, it will create that odour. EA therefore will keep PHE informed of anything which crosses the risk threshold and notify the CLP about the EA's enforcement compliance assessments.

Q: Stewartby PC expressed surprise that PHE felt this issue was not important enough to attend. He felt strongly that people deserve to be told that everything is safe and that they can sleep at night. He added that PHE were acting on information given to them by the EA, rather than information they could glean themselves and he felt it was scandalous PHE could not find the time to help people who live near the plant – the CLP should insist on their attendance.

NGd said he would feed this back; however, he believed that PHE were incredibly stretched at this time [due to Covid-19].

Q: Wootton PC echoed Stewartby PC's views and comments regarding PHE. He noted that a prominent member of PHE (Prof Ian Cosford) lives nearby in Haynes and that it was staggering no one from PHE could attend.

Q: BACI was interested to obtain the EA's view of the incident. She had spoken to Louise Greenwood and had been told there would be an investigation conducted by Ed'A and so she wondered what the outcome of the investigation was. In addition, she wondered whether it was possible to view the data sheets and show these to experts. She was also concerned about the terminology used to describe the incident – HZI stated that the emission was 'not harmful', while NGd described it as 'minimal'. She asked if this could be

clarified. In addition, she asked whether the EA would be present when the 3rd line was tested and, if so, whether they will have sufficient equipment to monitor what is happening. In their statement, HZI had said that they were keeping the EA informed of everything that was going on; that being the case, she wondered how it was that Ed'A had not known what the impact was liable to be.

Ed'A noted that, when the incident happened, the emission wasn't coming out of the stack – it was a release from a different point. She'd received a call saying that there had been a number of complaints from Lidlington. She travelled to Lidlington, experienced the odour and realised it was serious. She went back to the site and spoke to the team there (there were managers on site) and then she investigated with them why the odour was affecting Lidlington so badly. She confirmed it was from the plant and spoke to people from Lidlington and the surrounding area who gave her witness statements. She then went back to the site, where the team was considering testing the 3rd Line in a fairly short period of time. The EA was not satisfied with that and advised that they pause, identify the cause, investigate what had happened, what it was and why it had happened – and also to consider mitigation processes to prevent it happening again.

Ed'A then spoke to inspectors of 30-40 incinerators nationally and although the process of the drying of the refractory was common, the issue of heating up and production of strong odour was not. The EA had therefore asked Covanta to pause and they will not carry out testing on Line 3 until the EA is satisfied with the measures they have introduced. She has the documentation, though the investigation is not yet complete. She was satisfied, however, that what had happened was a rare event and that RSL are putting in place measures that will prevent this happening again.

Q: BACI asked whether the EA were satisfied this event will not happen again on the 3rd Line, which would be in a couple of days' time.

Ed'A said she was – she has the documentation and is working through that. She had been on site on [26th April] and witnessed smoke tests and other activities. She stated that the emissions came out through louver vents at the top of the Boiler Hall, so it wasn't under normal extraction. If it had been inside the furnace, the waste burning would be sucked up and go through the different filters that take out all the particulates. This event was on the side of the building – the Boiler Hall, the vents - so when Line 3 is tested, these will be shut, and the test will take place over a longer time frame.

Q: BACI asked how confident the EA was that this was not harmful to human health; perhaps the concentration was a lot higher than it should have been, due to weather conditions.

Ed'A said that she was confident – because it was such an unexpected event, she had to go by the documentation that was sent, that it was short-lived. It was similar to turning on a brand-new heater for the first time, although on a much larger scale; it does create an impact, it is unpleasant, but it isn't detrimental long term.

Ed'A commented that all she was able to do was experience the odour and then regulate the site. She reiterated that she was not able to comment on health impacts, as this does not fall within her training.

Q: BACI asked whether the EA was supporting HZI's assertion that it was not harmful to either human health or the environment.

Ed'A replied that HZI have provided her with documentation about this which she has not yet finished assessing.

Q: BACI asked whether the CLP would have access to this documentation.

Ed'A pointed out that the form she will complete after the investigation is public-registered, so it would be possible to view this.

Q: BACI asked whether this would include the data sheets referred to by Louise Greenwood.

Ed'A said that they would be in the report, but her form would be an assessment of these. If she would like to view these, she was sure Covanta would provide them.

Q: BACI asked whether the data sheets were commercially sensitive.

Ed'A didn't think so.

Q: BACI asked whether Ed'A thought it was important for her to be present at the heat up of the 3rd Line.

Ed'A felt that it was important that the assessment be carried out. She hadn't been present at Lines 1 or 2. She also felt that the site should operate and go through with the commissioning. If there were an issue, then she would respond accordingly, as is the EA's duty.

Q: Wootton PC asked whether it was possible for the Environmental Health Officers from BBC and CBC to attend the test on [the 28th April]. He felt that Covanta and HZI should invite them.

AT observed that a lot of complaints were received through Environmental Health in relation to the 2nd Line being commissioned and, as part of the response to those complaints directed to the Local Authority, it has been agreed that the channels for this type of event should go through to the EA because they are the regulator for this kind of facility. Therefore, Environmental Health would not be the appropriate authority.

Q: Houghton PC asked (1) whether Ed'A would consider what he had mentioned earlier in relation to the concentration of this odour and if there was any relation to what might be coming out of the stack in the future (2) whether PHE had been asked if there was an overriding concern regarding Covid-19 and the potential for problems arising out of the operation of this facility – because this is the question the CLP wanted PHE to answer by attending this meeting. If they have not put this question to PHE, he requested that they do so.

NGd said that he had asked PHE directly and they had provided a response, saying that the Covid-19 pandemic does not change their assessment of the overall impacts of the proposal.

Q: Houghton PC asked whether the CLP could have a written copy of this response.

NGd assured the meeting that, if it was not in the statement they have provided, he would forward the email in which this was stated.

Ed'A responded to the question about concentration by stating that they would not be looking at this because where the emission occurred during the last incident was not a planned emission point. The planned emission point would be the stack. She added that this occurrence was a one-off and should not happen again. There would be no point in modelling something or looking at concentrations of something that would not come out of that point again in the future.

Q: Houghton PC pointed out that the stack was immediately above the building where those emissions occurred.

Ed'A stated that the stack is around 100-105 m high, whereas the building was around 70 m.

Q: Houghton PC asked why the EA would not consider the possibility of some correlation there – he accepted there was a height difference, but that didn't change the topography or weather conditions.

NGd explained that Covanta had already mentioned that the louvers at the top of the building were open and the vaporised starch had left the building at very low velocity; i.e. there was no buoyancy coming out of that roof vent.

When the emissions do finally go out of the stack, they are going to be forced up at a [high] temperature, so the buoyancy effect will be significant. The velocity as it comes out of the top of the stack at the higher altitude makes it impossible to compare the two. The modelling that was done for this did take into account the topography of the local area. He reminded people of the old brickworks – the issues which occurred with down-draught from those stacks were down to the fact that it was dependent on the temperature of the flame going round the kiln, so it didn't have enough buoyancy to counteract some of the downwashes from the nearby ridge. For this reason, the stack at this plant is going to behave completely differently from what was seen at the brickworks – and neither can it be compared with the current odour issue. The odour issue is a relatively minor one – it is just as important, of course, because nobody wants people to be annoyed by the plant, so it's important the company gets on top of this, as they appear to be doing. In terms of health impacts, EA has fed back to PHE and they haven't raised any concerns.

BF drew the meeting to a close, inviting CLP members to email any outstanding questions, which he would then pass on.

8. Date & Items for next meeting

Q: Wootton PC asked whether the next meeting would be face-to-face.

Marston Vale Trust pointed out that the current rules for people holding events include an element of social distancing; if this remained in place, there wouldn't be the space to allow for the meeting to take place at the Forest Centre.

BF said we would need to discuss further and continue to monitor the situation. The provisional date for the next meeting would be Monday 26th July.

Addendum

*NB – Subsequent to the meeting, one or two CLP members are unable to make this date, including the Facilitator. The revised date will be **Monday 19th July**.*