



Questions submitted for Southern Water in respect of the meeting on 4 March 2022 re Winchelsea Beach Drainage.

- 1. When will Southern Water start being honest with the residents of Winchelsea Beach and admit that eliminating storm water and groundwater from the sewerage system will not prevent the sewage spillages from reoccurring?**

The sewerage system appears, from reports and data we receive, to be capable of conveying flows in dry weather and storm conditions when the ground is not saturated. Therefore, eliminating storm water and groundwater from the system will eliminate spills triggered by this type of flow. However, there may still be occasions when due to material flushed into the sewerage system blockages may occur. In addition, when a system is reliant on pumping and therefore on mechanical and electrical plant, there may be occasions when these components fail due to power outages or mechanical failure. These instances may cause interruptions to the wastewater service but are only generally short lived.

- 2. When will Southern Water stop blaming OFWAT for preventing them from updating the treatment works inlet and thus preventing the lack of capacity at Willow Lane pumping station from being resolved; and actually submit proposals for the necessary works to OFWAT for their approval?**

Southern Water does not blame Ofwat for preventing an upgrade to the wastewater treatment works (WTW) inlet works. The pumping station at Willow Lane is known to Southern Water as Morlais Ridge WPS. Close to the station is the point from which we need to tanker flows when the system is overwhelmed by infiltration flows. There are various options to reduce the issues affecting residents. The cause of the issues is due to flow in the system which should not be there. This could be dealt with by addressing the flow at source and eliminating that from the system or by allowing the flow to remain in the system and upsize all assets to accommodate this. Through the work we are doing we are looking to address the issue at source. To accommodate the flow in the system would require an upsize of the pumping station, the rising main and the WTW and would carry a high price tag. In addition, we may also find that because a conveyance scheme would increase conveyance capacity it would allow more groundwater flow to be drawn into the network and the problem will not be solved. Addressing this at source is the best way.

- 3. How much money has been spent on tankers since 2008 to date. Has any of this cost been borne by the Governments Flood Fund?**



The tankering cost has been borne by Southern Water through its operational budget. No other funds are available to bear this cost.

The cost since 2015/16 totals £948,917. This is as far back as we can go for figures.

**4. What works have been carried out in Winchelsea Beach in the last 12 months.**

Surveys of all manholes and sewers in the 14 caravan parks in Winchelsea, all at Southern Water's cost, to understand location and condition of these private drains. Surveys of 25 private lateral drains serving individual properties to build an understanding of the condition of private drains. Survey of roof drainage from 25 private properties to establish whether connections of rainwater direct to the foul system is an issue. Results have been shared with caravan parks and private properties. Commitments have been made to address issues found. We have now surveyed the entire legacy public sewerage system where there is a potential for ground water infiltration, this is around 4.5km.

**5. What works are planned for Winchelsea Beach in the next 12 months and when will this take place?**

Repairs to 740m of the public sewerage system where poor joints were detected during electroscan surveys. These will need to be completed once the high groundwater period has ended and before the summer holiday season. Continued manhole cover lifting on caravan parks to look for clear flow into the system.

**6. Is the 3.3 million planned investment for Winchelsea Beach solely for works? If so, what will the increased capacity be?**

The investment made in Winchelsea Beach will be a combination of improvements to the sewer network and the wastewater treatment works.

**7. When will the 3.3 million be spent – is this a short term or long term project? Is there a projected timetable for the works? Will this be made available to the public?**

We are still in the planning stage, we will be in a position to share details later in the year.

**8. What plans have Southern Water submitted to OFWAT for approval in respect of Winchelsea Beach sewerage problems?**

We do not submit plans specific to Winchelsea for approval by Ofwat.

**9. When is the next plan due to be submitted to OFWAT for approval?**



All water companies submit business plans to Ofwat every 5 years. The next draft plan is to be submitted in September 2023 and will cover the investment period 2025 to 2030 in detail. The final plan will be approved in December 2024.

**10. Does SW agree that the only viable long term solution is to upgrade the system (pumping stations, pipes and treatment works), as efforts to stop excess surface water entering the system have so far not had sufficient effect?**

No – see above.

**11. Does SW agree that the capacity of the system as originally designed is now insufficient for the increase in housing stock and the large increase in numbers of residential caravans or lodges since that date?**

No, the system was built as a foul only system and we don't see evidence that this is under capacity for foul only flows. We are trying to address the rainwater connections and infiltration into the network from the holistic drainage system.

**12. In current normal operation how close is the system to its operating maximum?**

The system was designed to convey and treat foul flows only. The critical asset in the area of interest is Morlais Ridge pumping station. This has a capacity of 13 l/s. The peak foul flow draining to the station is around 11 l/s and the average daily flow is around 5 l/s. The pumping station is therefore not overloaded for the flow it was designed to handle. However, over time surface water flows have been connected to the foul system and groundwater infiltration is known to be another cause of high flows. The approach we are taking is to reduce the flow into the system first before considering an upgrade to the system. There may come a point where further increases to base flow may require a change to this approach but we are keen to address the root cause of the problems currently occurring by a number of parties working together.

**13. By how much is the system overloaded in times of heavy rainfall compared to its maximum ?**

The predictions from our hydraulic modelling are that due to the current connections of surface and ground water flow to the foul only network, the system can be overloaded in intense rainfall events. We would expect this to occur at a frequency of twice a year. The aim of the current work is to restore the system to a foul only network.

**14. What is the yearly cost of tankering (including traffic management) averaged over the last five years?**

Average cost is £130,971 per annum over the past five years

**15. Who pays for this?**

Southern Water pays for the tankering from its operational budget.

**16. Considering the cost, both financial, social, and environmental, would it not make economic sense to spend this money on upgrading the system?**

For the reasons stated earlier at this stage it is a better strategy to address the flow at source rather than upsize the whole system and potentially still have an issue due to infiltration being drawn into the network.

**17. Are sufficient precautions in place to protect the public when filling the tankers?**

Yes. Tankering takes place in accordance with Traffic management requirements and manhole barriers/cones are used when loading.

**18. When will Southern Water offer compensation for the years of disruption caused by tankers to the businesses, bus service and half a dozen or so families whose daily life, safety, business, health and properties have been adversely affected by the tankering operation for the past 15 years?**

Water Companies are required to abide by the Guaranteed Standards Scheme (GSS) as a minimum whereby customers are compensated for levels of service below that expected. The GSS scheme covers instances of flooding, interruptions to supply etc. Where the compensation criteria is met Southern Water will pay compensation. Advice on how to claim compensation is available on our website at <https://www.southernwater.co.uk/our-story/guaranteed-standards-of-service>.

**19. In November 2021 we had a conversation with Simon Judd, a regional southern water manager, with whom I discussed the possibility of rotating the area from which the tankers pumped, to alleviate it always being me that had to take one for the village. Why cannot the tankers operate from other areas?**

The tankers have to operate from the point at which flow comes together and where there is a sufficient volume to extract flow from. Unfortunately this is close to Morlais Ridge pumping station and there are limited options for safely parking tankers whilst they draw wastewater from the system.

**20. On what date will Southern Water permanently upgrade the system to a point when tankers are no longer required?**

As per previous answers we do not agree that upsizing the system is the answer.

## **21. Concerns about Planning applications and additional development and Southern Waters lack of response to Planning applications bearing in mind the impact on the already strained sewage and drainage system.**

Southern Water is not a statutory consultee on planning applications. However Rother District Council can, and do, submit application consultations to us, and we have records of having responded to the following recent consultations;

- RR/2021/629/P - Bachelors Bump - Land at, Winchelsea Road, Guestling TN35 4LW - PLAN-039700
- RR/2017/2097/P - Rye and Winchelsea District Memorial Hospital, Peasmarsh Road, Rye Foreign TN31 7UD - PLAN-037289
- Rother RR/2020/2519/P Smugglers End Caravan Park, Pett Level Road, Winchelsea Beach, TN36 4ND - PLAN-037327
- Rother RR/2020/2446/P Winchelsea Sands Holiday Village, Pett Level Road, Winchelsea Beach, TN36 4NB - PLAN-037139
- Rother RR/2020/1059/P 13 Winchelsea Road, Rye TN31 7EJ - PLAN-036528
- Rother RR/2020/1295/P Solpax, Morlais Ridge, Winchelsea Beach, TN36 4LL - PLAN-035165
- Rother RR/2019/1779/P Grist Mill Winchelsea Road Rye TN31 7EL - PLAN-029694
- Rother RR/2018/2050/DC Co-Op Stores Sea Road Winchelsea Beach Icklesham TN36 4NA - PLAN-024747
- Rother RR/2018/526/P 3 Sea Road Pebbles Winchelsea Beach Icklesham TN36 4LH - PLAN-022710
- Rother RR/2017/2154/P Four Aces Caravan Park Victoria Way Winchelsea Beach Icklesham TN36 4NH - PLAN-020755
- Rother RR/2016/1484/P Gristmill Pine Winchelsea Road Rye TN31 7EL - PLAN-014918

See [how-we-engage-in-the-planning-process.pdf](https://www.southernwater.co.uk/how-we-engage-in-the-planning-process.pdf) (southernwater.co.uk) for further information.

## **22. When is Southern Water going to be honest and say that they cannot cope as it is, let alone with additional demands on the system and will Southern Water give us a date by which the overflows, smell and tankers will be gone?**

We do not believe that Southern Water has said that the current practice is acceptable. The sewerage system cannot cope with the amount of flow in the system in addition to that which was designed to be accommodated and conveyed to treatment. We have been saying for many years that to resolve the problem we need help from a number of other key players who are responsible for drainage including private property owners and those responsible for land drainage.

- 23. What is Southern Water going to achieve annually in say the next three years so we, the rate payers, can see a noticeable and measurable improvement in the service we pay for and please do not go down the route of blaming others (like caravan parks) for your inability to provide the service you charge us for?**

We hope to work together with others who have drainage responsibilities to address the issues causing the overloading of the system and return the system to conveying the flows it was designed for.

- 24. Please can you supply the size of the rising main from Morlaise PS and the depth of the well with flow data spanning pre and post upgrade.**

The rising main is 125 OD PE laid 2008. Capacity for this main would be 17 l/s @1.8m/s.

It goes from Morlais Ridge to re-connect with the original 100mm CI RM in the field past Castle Farm WPS.

- 25. Please can you supply yearly flow data from the inlet at the Winchelsea Beach WW treatment site.**

We do not have flow measurement at the inlet works of Winchelsea Beach WTW, the reason for this is that there is no flow separation at this point. The certified flow measurement is on the flow discharged from the works to the environment, the data for 2021 is attached.

- 26. Being that the treatment site permit states all flows shall be treated, isn't permanent tankering during high flows to another site proof your in breach of the permit as your unable to discharge at the receiving site as it would be over loaded.**

The permit requirement will be to treat all flows received at the wastewater treatment works. We tanker flows from the network to prevent property flooding.

- 27. You state lining works and surveying have been undertaken in Winchelsea Beach but residents haven't been asked for access to manholes for these works to be carried out so what sections have been lined/repared? please supply location marked map.**

Generally speaking the majority of the public sewerage system is laid in roads or public areas. The lining work required and completed is largely in these areas and access to private land would not have been required. However, where lining has required access to private land this would have been agreed with landowners.

- 28. What investment is planned for the treatment site to be able to take the flows when we finally get the flows sorted as currently the primary tanks are overloaded with any added flows above dialial flows?**



The aim is to prevent ingress which will remove any hydraulic overloading of the PSTs. We reassess site performance on a regular basis and will plan in investment if required, dependent on the success of surface water removal.

**29. You state a lot of the issue was down to "surface water" ingress into the system but doesn't having a salinity meter on your outfall indicate salt water has been entering the system via ground water for years?**

The ingress is due to ground water levels rising in wet weather and infiltrating pipework. Winchelsea Beach has a conductivity meter measuring the final effluent, and when working this does measure constantly. It is an indicator of salinity, as the two share a close relationship. This monitor is for information purposes and not relevant to the permit.

**30. The tankers recently have been enlarged from the usual 3k tankers to 6k this year. is this not an indication that the problem has gotten worse and increased in costs which we all have to pay in our bills. Maybe the residents should be refunded the last 14 years of bills to compensate or stop paying altogether?**

When an action plan is instigated, an available tanker is sent. Most often this is a 6K tanker. All are charged at the same rate. 3K tankers are harder to get as they are used on sites where access is trickier, so this is why a 6K tanker is more often used as they are more readily available. The tanker used is not to do with cost or the problem getting worse.

**31 Will Southern Water set up a dedicated and stable point of contact for affected Winchelsea Beach residents to report and record sewage incidents? In the past, telephone numbers for contact have been either discontinued or changed without notice.**

During office hours, your points of contact are Martha Spooner, County Customer Manager, and Sophie Cole, Case Lead. Any concerns/issues can be emailed to them

([Martha.spooner@southernwater.co.uk](mailto:Martha.spooner@southernwater.co.uk); [sophie.cole3@southernwater.co.uk](mailto:sophie.cole3@southernwater.co.uk)).

During out of office hours, any issues should be logged on this number: 0330 303 0368.

Martha and Sophie will be arranging a customer community meeting to speak to customers to go through concerns and thereafter they will arrange regular updates in the local parish newsletter.



March 17 2022