

ICKLESHAM PARISH COUNCIL

A local council for the peoples of Icklesham, Winchelsea, Winchelsea Beach and Rye Harbour

5th February 2021

OFWAT
4th Floor
21 Bloomsbury Street
LONDON
WC1B 3HF

Dear Sirs

Problems with the sewerage system at Winchelsea Beach in the Parish of Icklesham, East Sussex.

I am instructed to write to you on behalf of the Icklesham Parish Council to bring to your attention the problems that residents of Winchelsea Beach have had to put up with for more than a decade and the fact that according to Southern Water Services, the Water Authority for this area, you would not sanction the works that we believe are necessary to provide a permanent solution to the problems that exist at present.

I enclose a brief report outlining the history of the sewerage system, the problems that have been experienced, the meetings that have taken place in trying to resolve the problems and the lack of enthusiasm from Southern Water to grapple with what we see as the key issue, the lack of pumping capacity to ensure that peak flows in the sewer can reach the treatment works without creating the problems of sewage backup and overspill into gardens that are far too frequently being experienced by residents.

Whilst we acknowledge that Southern Water have spent a lot of time and effort trying to minimize the ingress of storm water into the system, new development at Winchelsea Beach continues at a pace with dwellings being replaced with larger dwellings fitted with all modern amenities, or with more than one dwelling. In addition, the holiday caravans are now being replaced by more modern units fitted with the trappings you would expect from 21st century dwelling houses, but they are now occupied for 11 months of the year legally and we believe in some instances for the whole year in breach of planning consent and licensing conditions.

The effect of these developments is that as fast as Southern water eliminate unwanted stormwater, it is replaced by a similar volume of genuine waste water.

Miss Claire Dyer, Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer
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It is for this reason that the Icklesham Parish Council believes that the only solution is to ensure that the pumping capacity of the sewerage scheme is modified so that when the sewer is operating at a high capacity the Morlais Ridge pumping station can cope with the volumes of waste water being pumped to it from three other pumping stations and that the treatment works can handle an increased volume of waste water at its inlet.

According to Southern Water the pumping capacity cannot be increased, not because it is not feasible to install a larger capacity pump, but because the inlet at the treatment works would not be able to handle the additional flow.

Their excuse for not pursuing this solution is that OFWAT would have to sanction the not inconsiderable expenditure of the works and that you would not do so. One of the reasons for writing to you is to ascertain if it is indeed correct that you would use your powers to block such a scheme. My Councillors await your response to these issues.

Finally, I note from your website that you are happy to provide speakers for meetings. I would like to arrange for a speaker for our Annual Parish Meeting in April, assuming we are allowed to hold one by then. A Friday evening in April would be preferable as I know that our MP would wish to be present if she can and Friday is the best day as it is at the end of the Parliamentary week.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Claire Dyer
Clerk and RFO

Cc Sally-Ann Hart MP

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