

Deputation to HBC meeting 13 Nov 2018 on behalf of Mill Close Residents

Thank you for allowing this deputation from the residents of Mill Close.

- We are a small residential community of 21 families on the site of the old Stoke Mill, which is on slightly higher ground than the flood plain that surrounds it
- We are half way between Haying Island's Main pumping station and Langstone harbour. You might say we are in the direct gravitational firing line of a fragile waste water sewage system that has, as its failure mode, the unlicensed release of raw sewage towards us and we don't have the luxury of a pump to send it back.
- The pumping Station is higher than us and well above the tidal gate that protects us from the sea and Langstone Harbour from our sewage system.
- When this tidal valve shuts, as it does twice a day, we have 5 or 6 hours to study the quality of effluent rising around us
- I have lived here for 26 years and we have been flooded many times from the sewage system. During every incident the worst spill was from a particular Manhole cover, number 9701, which regularly spewed raw sewage directly into the Pound Croft ditch which the Environment Agency classify as a Main River which flows round our properties and out into the harbour at low tide. It was particularly bad in 2010 when we were flooded 10 times in one year, each time from this manhole cover and also 9 others amongst our houses.

SW promised then to uprate the pumps and install non-return flap valves to protect our houses. At this time one of my neighbours had to redesign and rewire his house because sewage repeatedly got into the electrics under his house and another neighbour raised the threshold of his whole house by more than a foot to stop it flooding.

Even though SW uprated the pumping station, we were flooded again really badly in 2014 when the vital Hayling main road had to be closed.

This year on Friday 14 September I had cleared part of the ditch because it was dry and relatively easy to do.

When I went to bed the light was on in the pumping station; a regular occurrence, indicating some work was being done by SW. I was woken in the morning by a terrible sewage smell and went out to check the ditch which was then running with torrents of raw sewage. The same 9701 manhole cover was fountaining effluent into the ditch as usual; but this time it was much worse, there was an additional torrent, 2 foot deep, coming down the ditch towards our houses, from the direction of the pumping station as well.

I immediately went to the pumping station where one inadequate tanker was trying to pump out the main well. I took the driver and showed him the raw sewage pouring into the ditch 70 yards away. He immediately called for more tankers to slow sewage being pumped into the main well from the south of the Island. This was at 9 am and it was clear to me that the spill had been going for several hours. It continued until lunchtime the following day. Probably at least 36 hours!

The new leak was from the encasement of manhole cover 801 in dense undergrowth, clearly not checked for years; it took me a couple of days to hack through and find it. No one could possibly see this cover during the spill but we could smell it and hear it babbling away.

What stresses me and my neighbours most is that

- I was the only person looking for this new leak a good 5 days after the main pumps failure. Also
- We have had to suffer an appalling stench from the ditch for 2 months. The main river has still never been cleaned up to our satisfaction round our houses.
- We are not happy to be the only early warning to Southern Water that there is something wrong.
 - One of my neighbours alerts SW to problems 4 or 5 times every year when her toilets back up.
 - It is incredible to me that no one at SW guessed that the consequence of main pump failure would be a catastrophic

pollution spill towards us, until I pointed it out to them 10 hours after it started!

- Southern Water was unable to control the spill for at least another 24 hours. This was with no storm water present at all.

- I have a lot of admiration for Mark, the senior engineer at pumping Station, who worked tirelessly over the weekend to solve the problem under dangerous gas conditions.
- The whole sewage system is too fragile now that we have so many houses on Hayling and the filtration system is clearly inadequate to protect the pumps. We were lucky there was no storm water to aggravate the problem this time.