



## Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 9 September 2003

### Agenda Item Number 4 Smells from a Foul Sewer in Kenilworth

Please find attached a copy of all the questions/statements submitted for consideration by the above Committee, following the advert placed in the Kenilworth Weekly News on Friday, 29 August 2003.

In addition the order of business for this item will be as follows:-

- 1) A brief introduction by the Chairman and outline on the purpose for considering this item.
- 2) A verbal update on the current situation from Paul Leeman – Warwick District Council Divisional Environmental Health Officer.
- 3) A verbal update on the current situation from Margaret Burrup – Severn Trent
- 4) Consideration of the written questions submitted by members of the public on this matter, before the 12 noon deadline on 8 September 2003.

Members of the public who feel they have not had their questions answered or following the updates wish to ask supplementary questions, will be given the opportunity to speak but will be given a time limit of 3 minutes

- 5) The Committee will then debate the issue and make recommendations to the Council's Executive.

Dear Mr. Leach

I am in receipt of the letter from Councillor R I G Davies requesting questions to you on the foul sewer smells in Rouncil Lane.

My questions are as follows:-

As you are aware my wife and I, and before us her family have lived at 108 Rouncil lane for in excess of 15 years. We have the greatest sympathy for those neighbours that have had to endure the foul smells for many years as our problem has only been notified to you for a relatively short period of time.

It has been accepted by you Mr. Leach that a foul smell has been in our residence at 108 Rouncil Lane and has also been airborne in our surrounding gardens. You have carried out test on our waste pipes and have concluded that although not perfect there were no undue concerns.

Since you instructed that the County Council and Severn Trent carry out additional cleaning and flushing we have had no further smells.

1. What extra works/ maintenance have the County Council and Severn Trent done? Please detail this, so if we have a re-occurrence it will be very easy to measure if standards have been maintained.
2. Will this process be continued and if so at what periodicity? - If not why not?
3. And, as this process appears to have been successful for us will it be carried out and intensified for those other residents that live further down Rouncil Lane?
4. Why will the council (either District or County) not install air monitoring equipment to ascertain precisely what the smells are, and provide full information as to the possible health risks that may exist from them. I would remind the Council that not having sufficient funds for this is not a credible excuse as the Environmental health Act of 1990 sections 79 & 80 confirms that the council has a duty of care to "monitor and investigate fully any nuisances caused and reported by an individual."?
5. We as individual have a legal obligation to inform any potential buyers of our property that we have an on-going dispute and nuisance. The period of time for this is the past two years. What affect do you think this has on the values of our property? If blame can be proven then compensation shall have to be considered - will the Council support this claim if another party is subsequently proven to be negligent?
6. Finally, if the foul smells can be attributed to the Farm Fresh Abattoir are they conforming to their own licensees to produce? Clearly albeit a separate issue the production at Farm Fresh has been rising steadily over recent times, this can be heard form the amount of HGV traffic through the day and night. If they have increased production have they also increased their treatment of the waste inline with the rise and have the District/County Council and Severn Trent also increased their flushing and Maintenance in line with this rise?

I look forward to the responses to these and those questions of my neighbours at the meeting on the 9th September at the Council House, Southbank Road.

Yours sincerely

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To Councillor Davies

Re: Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee enquiry into - smells from a foul sewer in Kenilworth

Many thanks for the letter drop informing me of the proposed meeting scheduled for the 9th September at the council offices in Kenilworth. Unfortunately I will not be able to attend that meeting due to work commitments.

Notwithstanding this, I applaud the opportunity given to me to comment by email.

Being a recent house purchaser within Rouncil Lane, having moved into the area from Hertfordshire, I am more than a little concerned over the ongoing debate into the foul drain smell. This issue was never mentioned in my search prior to purchase or by the previous owner, but as I'm sure you will appreciate, the recent media interest on the subject could lead to the devaluation of my investment, which is totally unacceptable.

My understanding following conversations with neighbours is that this issue is infact not new but has been a topic of debate within the council chambers over a number of years. I have heard 'horror' stories of blood seeping through sewers covers from time to time which I have taken with a pinch of salt, but nonetheless it does leave my a little perturbed.

Also can I mention something which appears not to have been considered within the debate on smell and the abattoir. That is one of noise pollution generated by articulated lorries weighing up to 44tonnes as they hurtle past my drive at all hours of the day and evening on their way up to the abattoir. They have such an impact that they awaken my 3 year old daughter asleep in her bedroom at times sometimes close to midnight.

These trailer units are not only extremely noisy, but also present a danger to residents by speeding (or at least running faster than the road conditions should sensibly allow) on what I would call nothing much more than a small residential roadway. Also I'm sure they result in permanent damage to our foul sewer system which in part is under Rouncil Lane. Evidence on this damage can be seen at the junction of Rouncil Lane and Mortimer Road where the surface drain covers have sunk.

I appreciate your resolve to close these matters and would welcome feedback following the meeting of the 8th September.

Regards

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Re Appendix A

2.2.3 I can find not records of complaints.....

These smells have been the subject of complaints since the opening of this Abattoir. The only time in the last 20 plus years that there has not been a smell was when the business was closed down for a period. We were told the smell was attributed at that time to Snelsons not flushing through enough water after an operation.

Given that the sewer could not cope with an operation of that size, how on earth does anyone expect it to cope with the huge increase in waste that is now produced by Farmers Fresh?

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Re your letter regarding the Scrutiny Committee meeting at Southbank Road on 9<sup>th</sup> September concerning the "Rouncil Lane Smell" we would like to ask the following questions:

- 1) On the local Radio Station (WM) in the press Frazer Pithe of Severn Trent stated that on all their tests of discharge from the abattoir the septicity levels were clear. Mr Leeman of Environmental Health also stated the same in the press and to us personally on the phone.

When our Councillor Richard Davies asked the question at the scrutiny committee about these discharge tests, he was, I believe, told that not all of the results were clear as stated by the above. Can they please explain why different versions.

- 2) Also the micro organisms found in the sewers, what are they and are they dangerous to the health of the general public.

Yours Faithfully

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What is the number of animals being slaughtered per week at present?

And does the abattoir intend to increase the number if the Planning Application goes through for a "fleece treatment plant" This will increase the number of very heavy transport lorries using unsuitable roads to the abattoir.

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I would like to raise the following questions for the meeting on the 8/9/03 to consider.

1. Do the fumes pose a risk to health?
2. Why have both Severn Trent and Environmental Health taken so long to tackle the problem?
3. Why have they both been reluctant to accept that the cause of the problem is the discharge into sewers of waste from the abattoir?
4. If further measures do not alleviate the problem what do both agencies intend to do? For example will the licence issued to the abattoir to discharge into the public sewers be revoked?

5. At the meeting on the 9 July 2003 the representative from Environmental Health stated that the effluent from the abattoir is brownish in colour. At Christmas 2001 a rising main at the junction of Rouncil Lane and Sovereign Close malfunctioned causing red (blood) liquid to force its way through the pavement over the road surface and into the public drains. Can an explanation be given as to why the colour of the liquid was red and not brown. It emanated from the abattoir.

I should be grateful if these questions could be put and answered.

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Dear Sir,

As we have to live with this problem I would like to draw your attention to Appendix A 2.2.2

Why can't a treatment plant be installed on site? The abattoir is situated on high ground, and within a few hundred meters there is a brook (Finham Brook) which treated water could be pumped directly into. If the water is treated no environmental issue would be a problem.

The pipework installed was effectively a euro grant, the money did not come from the Local Council to construct this stupid pump away system, and I feel you should remove this pipework and install a treatment plant on site.

Item 2.4.2 is a silly issue. the smells are sickly at times, bad at most others. It is your responsibility to rid us of this pungent smell which in effect you know exists and admit responsibility. Effectively we recorded smells on your report (But were also on holiday for 12 days) so the reports could conclude "They didn't smell anything that day?"

I've just come out of hospital after 2 weeks, and the first thing that hit me when I got out the car at 7pm on 4<sup>th</sup> September was the smell.

I believe that everyone affected by this smell should receive a rates reduction, and water reduction until the matter is resolved.

Yours faithfully