

Rookery South CLP Meeting 19 Notes

Monday 18th October 2021 – 6.30 pm, Rookery South offices

Present :

CLP Members – Representatives from Houghton Conquest PC; Marston Moretaine PC; Millbrook PM; Wootton PC; Lidlington Resident; Stewartby PC; Cllr Sue Clark

Observers/Presenters – Rookery South Ltd: Judith Harper, Neil Grimstone; Covanta Energy Ltd: Andy Leonard, Roy Griffin, Mark Heffernan; Environment Agency: Neil Goudie (via Zoom); CBC: Roy Romans.

Facilitator: Bob Fisher (rmpfisher77@gmail.com)

Apologies for Absence: Cllr Tim Hill, Jon Shortland (BBC); Emma d'Avilar (EA); Anita Taylor (CBC); Lyn Lyman, John Symonds (CLP).

NOTES FROM THE MEETING

1. Introductions, CLP Ground rules & Apologies

The introductions included new representatives from Covanta: Andy Leonard, Director of Regional Operations (Europe) responsible for operations at Rookery South and all other European facilities including Dublin EfW; Roy Griffin, new Facility Manager (formerly Facility Manager at Viridor Runcorn EfW with more than 20 years' experience in the Waste industry and an ex-submariner in the Royal Navy; and Mark Heffernan, Environmental Manager for Covanta Europe.

2. Approval of Notes from Meeting 18

The notes from Meeting 18 were approved without any amendments.

3. Matters Arising, Q & A

BF had previously circulated responses to queries from Marston Moretaine PC (attached).

- **Q: Wootton PC** asked who would control [plant] traffic that is outside the control of Veolia. CBC noted that there is a section 106 agreement in place, that penalties could and should be imposed by Covanta for any breaches, and that breaches should be reported to the Local Authority directly to either Roy Romans or Anita Taylor, with as much detail as possible i.e. registration number, day, and time of the offence. CCTV is in place at the site entrance on Green Lane – historic data can be viewed. Waste collection vehicles not on a collection round should be reported.
- HGVs going to Veolia's depot at Stewartby Landfill were not subject to the requirements
- **Q: Wootton PC** asked whether this relied on public reporting. CBC said that the LA was happy for the public to report breaches, but that it would also rely on historical CCTV footage to view traffic coming in and out of the plant. **Marston Moretaine** added there was concern about ordinary refuse vehicles – from Flitwick, for example – coming down the back lanes through Millbrook and Lidlington.
- **NG** added that the main deliveries were from Sherwood, Veolia and their contractors.
- **Q: Sue Clark** asked whether the processes responsible for odours during the early summer had finished, and **Lidlington Resident** asked if they should be seeing smoke. Covanta confirmed that early commissioning had finished and that no smoke

is produced, only steam from the stack which condenses on meeting cooler air when it emerges.

4. Site Updates

RSL presented slides (2 & 3, attached) with details covering

- Current Commissioning Activity;
- Outstanding works to be completed in Q4;
- Community Programmes and
- Other Activities.

RSL reported that the plant is now running flat out, generating some 58MW that afternoon. Each line is burning 20 tonnes (equivalent to one truck load of waste) each hour. A performance test will be run in Quarter 4 of 2021; if it goes well the plant will then be handed over from Hitachi (HZI) to RSL.

RSL has been working with designers (*Easy Tiger*) regarding the Visitor Centre. The General Manager asked if anyone would be interested in contributing ideas towards what they would like to see in the Visitor Centre [Contact Neil Grimstone direct]. The Visitor Centre should be completed by Q2 next year. Also there are 5 vacancies still to fill, advertised on the Covanta website (www.covanta.com), including the post of Education Officer. RSL is still lobbying E-W Rail to retain the level crossing for the exclusive use HGVs arriving and departing from the EfW facility.

- **Q: Lidlington res.** Asked about the circumstances regarding bridleways. RSL responded that the nature of the paths is designated by the DCO (Development Consent Order) planning consent and cannot be changed but RSL has agreed to design the paths to enable use by horses/riders. The Local Authority confirmed that it is very unlikely that they would prosecute for riders using the footpaths and that anyone can apply to the Council Rights of Way officers for the paths to be upgraded. It was acknowledged that this can take some time.
- **Q: Lidlington res.** Asked how the CEI will be paid. RSL said that GrantScape will confirm registered persons' details and pay the money direct; it will not come off the electricity bill. £100 first payment as it includes a half year for 2021; £66 (indexed) thereafter.

5. Emissions Data

It was noted that RSL is obliged to publish the emissions data and to consult the CLP about how it is done, noting that there is no obligation to provide real time data. This is the start of that consultation. RSL presented a slide (4, attached) with the proposals. A discussion followed.

- **Q: Sue Clark** considered that people would like to drill down into more detail and that it is better to demonstrate transparency, which would in turn help the company to create a positive impression.
- In response to a **Wootton PC** question, RSL confirmed that the emissions were measured within the stack and that NOx levels were after the flue gas treatment process within which ammonia is used to break down the Nitrogen Oxides to form Nitrogen and water, staying below the limit.
- **Q: Houghton Conquest PC** considered that people are more interested in when and how often the limit is exceeded - rather than the average level of emissions - and

how many times it would need to be exceeded before the Environment Agency (EA) take action.

- **EA** responded that the data details for publication is up to the public, but that the EA will report any exceedances at the CLP meeting and is answerable to the public to validate information and investigate the cause of any breaches. It would be very unusual to have live data online. The EA report would include narrative about any enforcement response. But a display should be in a format that can be understood.
- **Q: Lidlington res.** asked if the emissions were dangerous to health and could they be lower than just below the limit. **Covanta** responded that there is a balance between resource consumption and plant efficiency. **EA** added that the permit would not have been issued had there been any likelihood of causing a risk to health.
- **Covanta** proposed that they circulate schedule 4 of the Environmental permit with the minutes as this is a public document and provides details of the parameters that must be reported, with frequency.
- **The Local Authority** proposed that RSL should put together a scheme for display of emissions data, explained against other monitoring data, and send it to all CLP members for an opportunity to reflect and comment before the final scheme is decided upon.
- **Q: Houghton Conquest PC** was happy for limited data with average figures to be displayed if the CLP is kept informed of breaches
- **The EA** would expect to make the first quarterly report available as soon as the plant is out of commissioning, so probably next meeting. NB reports would lag by 1 month as they are produced within 28 days of the reporting period.

6. Regulator Update – EA

The EA presented a report summarised on a slide (5, attached).

The plant is in commissioning but if there are any exceedances they are still assessed as non-compliances, but the enforcement response would be dictated by those activities. Rookery South ERF is well below the permit levels. There have been 6 odour reports, some of which could not be attributed to the EfW facility; Covanta has responded pro-actively taking appropriate action although some reports were unsubstantiated by evidence.

The EA will carry out operator monitoring in the next quarter/half year. They assess quality control aspects of all the monitoring – emissions to air, water, the standard of the equipment the management systems, any contractors that have come in to do any sort of calibration tests, and any day-to-day, monitoring and maintenance done by the company itself.

- **Sue Clark** asked if six reports of odour was a lot or not very many, based on evidence that, whilst many people complain on Facebook, few report issues formally. There is a lot of education to be done. The EA considered it was average for a new plant.
- There followed some discussions, the outcome of which was that **Stewartby PC** and **Marston Moretaine PC** will publish details of where to send complaints in their next newsletters. The RSL General Manager also responds to complaints that come via the Rookery South website. Covanta emphasised that details of when and where were important in order to check against the plant's operational status and weather conditions at that time.

7. Regulator Update – Local Authority

The Planning Authority gave a verbal report:

Once hot commissioning is finished, and the plant is operated commercially there are various things that need to be in place by that timetable. The LPA job is to look at the DCO and s.106 as regards the pre-completion activities. The LPA visited the site 15/10/21 and was basically happy with what they saw; in the next few months all the hard landscaping will be carried out. They will be checking that it is in accordance with the scheme.

The LPA noted that Millbrook Power has a DCO [in Rookery South pit]; construction is due to begin in second quarter of 2022 and they will be using the Green Lane Access Road. The LPA proposed that Millbrook Power could have a slot at this CLP meeting as all are keen to learn from the ERF development. It will be a major construction project but its impact once in operation will be low.

- CLP members were broadly in favour of not having to have a separate meeting with Millbrook Power
- Millbrook PM was concerned about traffic issues since people associated the name with Millbrook and might result in more misdirected vehicles.
- Covanta asked if Millbrook Power has its own s.106 requirement for a CLP. The LPA will check this

8. AOB

Houghton Conquest PC asked if the CLP would be meeting at Rookery South ERF regularly. If so, would visitor forms be required each time? RSL said the meetings would be at the ERF. Covanta said that it was whatever the code of practice would be for safety and security.

The date of the next meeting was proposed as **Monday 17th January, 6:30pm at Rookery South Offices.**

The meeting was concluded and followed by a limited 'tour' to see the Visitor Centre (prior to fit out) and the Control Room – with views of the waste bunker.

It was noted that visits to the plant by the wider community might be available from early next year.