

CHAPEL FARM WASTE & RECYCLING OPERATIONS LIAISON COMMITTEE

Minutes of a liaison committee meeting held at Blunsdon Village Hall on Monday 12th June 2006.

PRESENT

Blunsdon St Andrew Parish Council

Councillor Stuart Boyd
Councillor Michael Compton

Hills Group

Peter Andrew, Waste Disposal Manager
Edwyn Dodd, Waste Facilities Manager
Barrie Hedges, Communications Adviser

Apologies

Councillor Doreen Dart, Swindon Borough Council
Councillor Rod Kensett, Cricklade Town Council

OPENING

Barrie Hedges opened the meeting by explaining that Hills had initiated the committee because it believed that both company and community would benefit from closer liaison. The company recognised that any extensive operation focused on waste and recycling had the potential to create concerns within neighbouring communities and it was important to achieve a two-way flow of information. It was agreed that the gathering was small enough not to require formal appointment of a chairman.

SITE PROFILE

Peter Andrew provided an overview of the Chapel Farm operation which he said is a key strategic facility for Swindon and for the wider area. While the emphasis is moving increasingly towards recycling and waste minimisation, landfill still has a significant part to play in the overall picture. Currently, the site is contracted to provide a landfill and recycling service to Swindon Borough Council until 2016. A further extension beyond that is envisaged in the Waste Local Plan.

The site already operates a skip sorting operation which it is envisaged will expand over the next two years. Hardcore is processed and used as an on-site road building material, while soils are recovered for use in restoration.

The company is similarly investing in developing its wood recycling operation – a market that is expanding following significant demand from power stations. Wood is also recycled for use as chipboard and used as site engineering material. Other key activities included asbestos disposal (see below).

The company is keen to ensure that the facilities at Chapel Farm are state-of-the-art and is planning to upgrade its leachate treatment facilities. The system used involves a natural biomass treatment process which ultimately discharges safely to the sewer system.

It is also proposing to add a third engine capable of adding to its capacity to convert landfill gas into electricity for the national grid. It already generates sufficient electricity to meet the needs of some 4,000 homes. With the third engine this would increase to 5,500 homes.

Action: The Chapel Farm fact sheet tabled at the meeting will be developed and placed in the community zone of the Hills website www.hills-group.co.uk

ASBESTOS DISPOSAL

Edwyn Dodd explained the service provided by the site for disposal of asbestos, which he said is officially classified as a stable non-reactive hazardous waste. It is, he said, harmless to people and to the environment when properly managed.

Current guidance from the Environment Agency involves disposing of this waste in a separate clay-lined “asbestos mono cell”. Strict procedures are in place for safe handling of the waste, which generally arrives mixed with soil so that it cannot become airborne.

Loads are managed by a dedicated machine and operator wearing appropriate protection. Unlike domestic waste, asbestos does not generate leachate or gas.

In order for the waste to be managed in a safe and controlled manner, loads have to be booked in at least 24 hours prior to tipping. Strict control is maintained over paperwork to ensure that every consignment is properly accounted for to the Environment Agency.

ACCESS ROAD

Peter Andrew explained that M J Church have been awarded the contract for construction of a new inner access road. This will provide a high quality surface for easy and efficient access to current and future areas of the site.

COMPOST

Peter Andrew said that that the site has been identified in the Waste Local Plan as a suitable location for composting and Swindon Borough Council is keen to increase volumes over the coming years. A site had been selected to the left of the entrance road and a planning application is being developed. The company is also working with SBC on a recycling project at waterside in Swindon.

RESTORATION

Phase 1 of the site has already been restored to final levels and is grazed by sheep. Some remedial work is planned over the coming months to areas that have subsided. The same process of contouring to final levels, capping with clay, sub-soiling and topsoiling will follow on phase 2.

TRAFFIC ISSUES

Councillor Boyd asked whether Hills was aware of the revised road pattern that would emerge from the new by-pass and its likely effect on lorries accessing the site. His understanding was that such traffic would face a complex and possibly difficult route into the site using the old road.

Action: Hills will obtain further information about the revised by-pass junction plan and respond accordingly

CIVIC AMENITY SITE

Councillor Boyd asked whether Hills had considered providing a household recycling centre at the site. Mr Andrew said that any such move would depend upon the requirements of Swindon Borough Council and incorporation into its wider network of such centres. At present, there were no such plans for Chapel Farm.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the committee will be called by Hills in advance of the proposed planning application for a new composting operation. The meeting will start with a site

tour.

Action: Barrie Hedges to advise