

PURTON WASTE & RECYCLING OPERATIONS LIAISON COMMITTEE

Minutes of a liaison committee meeting held at the Millennium Hall, Purton on Thursday 22nd June 2006.

PRESENT

Purton Parish Council

Councillor Godfrey Fowler (Chairman)
Councillor Tony Price
Councillor Ron Harris

North Wiltshire District Council

Councillor Helen Dixon (also representing Wiltshire County Council)
Councillor Geoff Greenaway (also representing Purton Parish Council)

Ps & Qs

Dr Richard Pagett

Braydon Parish Meeting

Mrs Tricia Portch

Hills Group

Mike Webster, General Manager, Hills Waste
Peter Andrew, Waste Disposal Manager
Barrie Hedges, Communications Adviser

OPENING

Mike Webster 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.

SITE PROFILE

Peter Andrew gave an overview of the different operations at the site, which he said provided an important strategic service to both Wiltshire as a whole and to Swindon. The nature of operations had changed significantly over recent years as greater emphasis had been placed on recycling. The individual operations now consisted of:

- **Purton Landfill** – the original landfill site which had specialised in hazardous wastes over recent years and was now nearing completion
- **Parkgate Farm Landfill** – granted permission for non-hazardous landfill in 1995 and has a Pollution Prevention Control (PPC) permit to operate as a non-hazardous landfill. A planning application has been submitted (and awaits a decision) to change the use of part of this area to hazardous waste landfill.
- **Household Recycling Centre (HRC)** serving the needs of the immediate area and complementing the kerbside collections operated by Hills
- **Depot** - a transport depot and base for skip recycling activities

PARKGATE FARM PLANNING APPLICATION

The Parkgate Farm application for hazardous waste disposal is due to be discussed by Wiltshire County Council on 12th July. If permission is granted, the company plans to transfer operations from the current Purton Landfill. Access would be via the bridge over the railway line built for the purpose some years ago. Work could start during July on the engineering of the first waste cell adjacent to the farm buildings.

The operation would become one of a small number of hazardous waste landfills across the UK, providing an important service on a regional basis. The majority of the wastes received would, however, come from the Wiltshire area.

The site had been selected because of the great depth of thick Oxford Clay which provided a secure engineered base and prevented contamination of ground water and water courses. The landfill would be only around 11 metres deep on a clay bed well over 100 metres thick.

While great confusion surrounded the term “hazardous wastes”, the reality was that they would typically consist of soils from development sites contaminated by oil, paint tins and batteries. Other waste might include filter cake produced by industrial operations such as the Royal Mint where used sand moulds are contaminated by metal used to make coins. The site would operate to a strict licence identifying wastes it was permitted to handle and would not deal with radioactive or liquid wastes.

The site would be closely monitored by the Environment Agency whose inspectors

typically visit on a weekly or fortnightly basis. Water checks would be a key feature of the monitoring programme undertaken by Hills and checked by the EA.

The site would receive around 50,000 tonnes of hazardous waste a year which compared with 150,000 to 200,000 tonnes in days when it received non-hazardous waste.

The process for acceptance of particular wastes by the site would involve:

- Stage 1 – enquiry from contractor or consultant. Initial guidance given on waste types permitted by the site licence.
- Stage 2 – Sample provided to Hills for analysis of contaminants against official Waste Acceptance Criteria.
- Stage 3 – If suitable, Hills quote contractor or consultant and provide acceptance criteria and guidance on lorry routes.

TRAFFIC ISSUES

Concern was expressed by the community representative about the routes to be taken by lorries bringing waste to the site, especially during the planned closures of specific roads over coming months. Hills representatives said that they were able to exert greater influence over the comparatively small number of contractors dealing with them on hazardous wastes and would guide them towards selected routes. Preference for vehicles accessing from the M4 was likely to be via the Swindon Northern Orbital Road. The company will be mindful of the concerns expressed and report further at the next meeting.

COMMUNITY LIAISON

It was agreed that it was important for information about site activities to be made available via the committee to the wider community. In particular, it would be helpful for local people to have a better appreciation of what constitutes hazardous wastes to be handled. The Hills representatives undertook to prepare a fact sheet, the content of which would be suitable for use in the parish magazine. The sheet will be available to Councillor Dixon early in July prior to the meeting that will discuss the Parkgate Farm application. This, together with minutes of meetings, would also be posted in the community area of the Hills website www.hills-group.co.uk.

ODOUR INCIDENT

Information was awaited from the Environment Agency over any further action on an incident in September 2004 when a TCP-like odour was released from the existing site. Mr Andrew said that the waste had been taken by the contractor to two other landfills before coming to Purton. The loads met the relevant waste acceptance criteria but it was only when tipped that the odour problem became apparent. Tipping had been stopped as soon as the problem was revealed.

Dr Pagett said he understood the investigation into the incident involved three Environment Agency area. He said he had been told that a second odour release occurred a few days after the first one.

RESTORATION PROGRAMME (PURTON LANDFILL)
<p>The current Purton Landfill was now virtually complete and the final area would be subject restoration and seeding with grass in the spring of 2007. While it would settle, this would be to a modest degree compared with domestic landfills. Asked about the quality of the grass sward on previously restored areas, Mr Webster said that the variety chosen had been subject to testing before use.</p>
RECYCLING OPERATIONS
<p>The Purton Household Recycling Centre was one of a network of ten sites across the county operated by Hills on behalf of Wiltshire County Council. Latest figures showed that it was recycling some 80 per cent of the materials handled.</p> <p>Concern was expressed about use of the site by builders and other businesses, with the result that access to recycling bins was delayed for the public. Mr Webster said that the situation was monitored and registration numbers were taken where it became obvious that individuals were bringing large quantities in vans.</p> <p>A more detailed presentation on the HRC with latest figures would be provided at the next meeting.</p>
CONCRETE PLANT
<p>While permission had been granted for construction of a concrete plant at the site, the Hills Waste representatives said they were not aware of any immediate plans by their colleagues at Hills Concrete to construct one.</p>
FOOTPATHS
<p>Purton Parish Council representatives had met Alan Pardoe and Lance Parry of Hills in July 2005 to discuss the condition of footpaths in the vicinity of the site but had heard no more from the company. The discussion included a need for stiles and removal of debris. Progress will be checked and the community representatives advised.</p>
MOPES LANE
<p>The company had made significant improvements to the condition of Mopes Lane, though settlement remained a problem. The company will look again at the condition of fencing and damaged bollards. It will also ensure that the road is regularly litter picked.</p>
MILLENNIUM HALL
<p>The community representatives explained the serious structural problems at the Millennium Hall which had been part funded by Hills via the Landfill Tax. Efforts to achieve redress from the builder had so far failed and the floor remained a particular concern. This had been raised with Alan Pardoe and Lance Parry when they met Purton Parish Council representatives in July 2005. Some £33,000 had been spent on repairs to</p>

date and a further £15,000 was needed to address problems with the floor. The company representatives promised to assess what support the company might be able to give.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the committee will take place on Thursday 14th September 2006, starting at the Purton Landfill site offices at 4pm.