

## **Minutes of Meeting**

04 February 2021, Virtual Meeting at 6pm

<b>Attendees</b>	
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Name</b>
Thames Water	Richard Aylard (Chair)
	Nigel Watts
	Dina Gillespie
	Samantha Duffy
	Gayle Thomas
	Jonathan Coldwell
	Barbara Ismay
	Jane Clark
	Mark Colvin
London Borough of Hounslow	Tony Bull
	Zaheer Kadri
Public Representative	Ruth Cadbury (MP)
Residents	Murray Edwards
	Mick Hickman & Sian Henson
	Keith Knight
	Rob Gray
	Barry Edwards
	Caroline Elms
	Garth & Anna King
	Simon Cass
	Katie Vassar
	Mark Smith
	Will Smith

No.	Content		Due date of Action
	<p>At the request of the chair (R Aylard TW) residents were welcomed and attendees introduced themselves.</p> <p>The chair outlined the agenda for the evening's meeting.</p>		
1	<b>Review of previous minutes</b>		
1.1	<p><b>Actions of previous meeting</b></p> <p>N Watts (TW) asked how the work will be communicated to residents?</p> <p>The comms plan for the Mogden Resilience Project has not fully been developed as yet, but we will utilize measures that we've developed previously such as sending notifications, posting updates on our webpage as well as information packs that will be sent by post to our 10 000 neighbours. More information to be shared in our September meeting.</p> <p>M Edwards (MRAG) asked for Richmond Council complaints received and process.</p> <p>Richmond Council confirmed that they haven't received any recent complaints but that they have received one on 28th September 2020. They said that when they receive complaints from residents in the Borough of Richmond, they will visit the complainants address and witness any odour issues, should there be an odour issue they will contact Thames Water to discuss the matter.</p> <p>M Edwards (MRAG) asked for the actual process, number to call etc.</p>	<div data-bbox="1029 1274 1179 1335" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Action</div>	

2	<p><b>Operations Update</b></p>		
2.1	<p><b>Sewage Discharge in the Duke of Northumberland River (DNR)</b></p> <p>R Aylard (TW) said he will explain what happened and address any questions thereafter. He apologised to the residents on behalf of the company.</p> <p>He said on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021 a large amount of silt and grit blocked up the inlet screens and tankers were brought in overnight to try and remove it, however on Friday morning it was clear that it was completely blocked and the flows were diverted to the storm tanks and to the river Thames. By 7am the workers on site started to manually remove the grit and silt however the sewer rose to such an extent that it breached the bricked-up culvert and discharged into the DNR. He said the sewer into the site is in a big culvert several metres below the surface and goes over a weir as it enters. It is positioned in this way so no matter how much the water level rises it will still go over the weir. However, the screens through which the incoming sewage passes became completely blocked with an unprecedented amount of silt and grit which resulted in the sewage backing into the network, putting pressure onto the bricks of the culvert. Due to the pressure some of the bricks of the culvert became displaced which were not designed to handle the pressure and caused sewage to discharge into the DNR.</p> <p>He said the DNR is a managed waterway and was not designed for large flow from a sewage works the size of Mogden and that is the reason the levels started to rise so rapidly. He said that many of the residents were told at the time that the incident was caused by the high flows in the river and what was happening at the sewage works didn't have much to do with it but that was wrong. He said that they now have a better understanding even though investigations are still ongoing it was the flows coming from the side of the culvert that made the DNR river rise.</p> <p>He continued by explaining the diagrams of the inlet and how the process works. He said that it was a large amount of grit that caused the screens to block and that it had never happened before and that they will make sure it doesn't happen again.</p> <p>He also explained the photos of the displaced bricks and explained where the sewage overflowed from that caused the levels of the DNR to rise so high.</p>		

<p>S Cass (Resident) disputed the timeline and said that he had water coming into his house at 11.35pm. R Aylard (TW) said one or 2 bricks could've broken earlier or the water was coming out somewhere else. He said that he will note the time mentioned by S Cass (Resident) and that and it will help with their investigation.</p> <p>B Edwards (Resident) raised his concern about a pollution prevention plan and R Aylard confirmed that they do have plans in place to deal with pollutions but not one for this specific incident.</p> <p>W Smith (Resident) wanted to know if TW are looking at making the bricks more secure to ensure it doesn't fail again and wanted to know why the delay to residents about the flood when someone was able to take the photo at the time. R Aylard (TW) confirmed that the work to repair the brickwork will be looked at as part of the investigation and also by their engineering team. He said that they will ensure the new construction is strong and robust. He also said that they should've engaged sooner with residents even though there would have not been enough information at the time.</p> <p>M Hickman (Resident) wanted to know why letters was sent to residents blaming the river level when they had known about the issue. R Aylard (TW) apologised and said that they weren't trying to deceive anyone and the team was doing their best in a very difficult time and that they should have done better.</p> <p>K Knight (Resident) said he would've expected TW to have an emergency contact with the EA to warn them if they need to get the sluice gates open. He said if a procedure was in place then this would not have happened. R Aylard(TW) agreed that the operation of the sluice gates are very important and said that they didn't know exactly what had happened and no one anticipated that they would get such a blockage and that the flow will back up at that point. He said the water could have come out at any point, but it chose that particular weak point and at that stage the flow was completely backed up. He said it wasn't obvious that it would come out there and that it could have come out any other place and it could have been better or worse. He said the point of the operation of the sluice gates will be picked up as part of the investigation.</p> <p>K Knight (Resident) said that the structure looks as it was put into place in 1936 and the brickwork installed in the last 20 or 30 years to cover the sewer and not to hold back water. R Aylard (TW) said that they will go back through the records as part of the investigation.</p>		
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<p>R Cadbury (MP) raised questions about the operation of the sluice gates and the communication between TW and the EA. She asked that a timeline be provided. She also mentioned her concern about staffing issues as well as investment in infrastructure, maintenance, and repairs.</p> <p>R Aylard confirmed they will collaborate the time line with other investigations, he said as part of the investigation the operation of the sluice gates, how it operates, alarms and emergency measures will all be looked at. N Watts (TW) said that the EA will carry out a separate investigation and that an investigation together with the site team will look at areas of investment and maintenance.</p> <p>W Smith (Resident) didn't feel that the weather was that extreme that justified their garden being flooded with sewage and asked for more clarification to put the residents at ease. R Aylard (TW) said that there is no weather condition that justifies the flooding. He also said that the rainfall was very heavy and that it did fall on saturated grounds and when this happens a lot of surface water gets into the network but what was extraordinary on this occasion was the volume of grit that got onto the screens and they do not know why.</p> <p>D Gillespie (TW) said the staff at Mogden had never seen this volume of grit and that she thinks it could be due to a large accumulation of grit that got dislodged due to the high flows or that it was dumped into the sewer from a construction site or tarmac from a road.</p> <p>R Aylard (TW) confirmed that over the years they have had incidents where they had to remove rubble and concrete from sewers and that it will be looked at again.</p> <p>R Aylard (TW) confirmed that the findings will be made available and be discussed at future meetings. He also said that they will be contacting households that were affected by the flooding and that they will be making goodwill payments to each household on an individual basis. He also asked residents to contact Gayle if they want to dispose of contaminated items and that a skip will be placed on the street at a convenient place.</p> <p>R Gray (Force) said that it has been pointed out to him that there is a tidemark all along the river on both sides with rag. R Aylard (TW) said that the tidemark on the river is from other incidents. J Coldwell (TW) said that they aware that there are still deposits of rags in the water course and that they will make efforts to clean it up as best as they can. He also said that at this stage they can't be sure of the overall impact but that they have a monitoring contractor who will attend on a routine basis to investigate the water course. They can then track the condition to see if there is any longer-term impact.</p>	<div data-bbox="1045 226 1177 286" data-label="Text">Action</div> <div data-bbox="1045 1361 1177 1422" data-label="Text">Action</div> <div data-bbox="1045 1637 1177 1697" data-label="Text">Action</div>	
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R Cadbury (MP) said that she was a bit concerned about the correspondence suggesting that people might want to contact their insurers. R Aylard (TW) said that they will be making a goodwill payment to everybody, but it is then up to the individual homeowners if they chose or not to claim from their insurance.

A King (Resident) wanted to know if she and her neighbour who suffered internal flooding when water ran through the airbricks underneath their floors should claim from their home insurance. R Aylard confirmed that is what insurance companies are therefor and that they may then try and claim against TW but that it will be handled separately by their insurance experts. A King (Resident) wanted to know how TW will assess the goodwill payment. R Aylard said that it is a discretionary policy and they will be explaining how much to each household individually.

M Hickman (Resident) said that he is concerned about the under investment he is hearing about and that the issue will have an impact on house prices in addition to the increase of insurance premiums. R Aylard (TW) confirmed that a once off incident like this shouldn't affect house prices and that homeowners should claim on their insurance policies as it is very clear that it is a once off incident. He also said that he doesn't accept the suggestion that there has been under investment.

R Aylard (TW) said that the company have been over investing and spending more than the regulatory allowance for each of the last 15 years and a lot of that overspent has been at Mogden. He said the last upgrade was 130 million pounds, and that there is a 70 million upgrade starting soon. He also confirmed that the maintenance budgets have been increased significantly. He confirmed that they have a fixed allowance from the regulator to spend efficiently across the whole company.

M Hickman (Resident) said because of what happened it will be much harder to sell his house which means it will sell for less money. R Aylard (TW) said that may be the case but from his experience he doesn't accept that. He said the resident would need to talk to his estate agent but from his experience, a once-off incident like this wouldn't affect house prices, particularly where there is an explanation, remedial action, and a good plan afterwards.

	<p>K Vassar (Resident) wanted to know if the goodwill gesture will have a clause attached to say that they will not be able to submit any future claims. R Aylard (TW) confirmed that it is a goodwill gesture and it will be up to the individual to accept or not and can be discussed on an individual basis.</p> <p>W Smith (Resident) also wanted to know if TW will be leaving a public record on the website for future searches. R Aylard (TW) said that they will not be leaving anything on the website, but everyone affected will receive documentation which can be kept and passed on.</p> <p>K Knight (Resident) asked about cleaning of the road as he was concerned about the pathogens. R Aylard (TW) wanted to know if he was specifically concerned about covid-19 and assured him that a lot of research has been done and the live virus has not been detected only dead RNA fragments. J Coldwell (TW) confirmed that a clean-up of the street will be carried out.</p> <p>W Smith (Resident) asked for the next steps to be confirmed. R Aylard (TW) said that investigations are ongoing and that that TW will contact every household individually. He also confirmed that there will be an update at the next quarterly meeting if the investigations are concluded and that they will also write to the residents once the details of the findings are signed off.</p>	<p>Action</p>	
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4	<p>R Gray (Resident) asked about the time scale for the fish migration weir and also wanted to know if J Clarke (TW) will be focusing on the badgers as he is interested to know how many there are. He mentioned the swift tower and said that this has been an idea for a while now.</p> <p>J Clarke (TW) confirmed the timeline for the fish pass is October 2020 to June 2021. She also said that there are isolated pockets of badgers in West London and one of the objectives of the filming is to see how many there are. She said regarding the swift tower, timelines has been tricky to deliver some of the projects with the pandemic and that she will raise it again.</p>	Action	
	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>R Cadbury (MP) asked about the TW alert system not working properly. She also said that she got both of the alerts as a member of the Chiswick community club and they tend to come at the same time as the hammersmith one. She wanted why she wasn't getting any rower alerts from Mogden and what are TW doing in expanding the capacity of the storm tanks.</p> <p>R Aylard (TW) said there was a short period of time when they had an issue with the manual system issuing the alerts and confirmed that the notifications went via a separate method to the EA. He explained Mogden was discharging for a continuous period and they've not been issuing alerts every day. He said that it has been agreed with the EA when the works discharge there will be a new alert every day. He said that the reason there has been alerts for Hammersmith is because it is a pumped discharge and you get quite a period of several hours and stop and start again. He said Mogden might be discharging at a low level and only one alert will be sent at the beginning but going forward there will now be daily alerts while Mogden is discharging.</p> <p>He continued by explaining that due to misconnections and cross connections a lot of water gets into the sewers. He said this can be traced back to when the sewers were part of the local authority's responsibility and both the waste and surface water was supposed to be separate but very often to solve problems a cross connection would made. He said this together with a lot of misconnected houses the flow arriving at Mogden gets much higher after rain and stays high for a longer period due the long network.</p> <p>He also said that because of the process they can only treat a fixed amount which is set in regulation and when they get high flows it diverts to the storm tanks and only when the flow drops it gets pumped back to be treated, but this isn't always possible when the flow into the site continues to be high. He said this is when there is no alternative but to allow the storm tanks to overflow into the river.</p>		

	<p>He explained that having more storm tanks will not solve the problem because when you have a constant high flow you will be filling storm tanks indefinitely which also means it will also take longer to empty causing the sewage to become septic and odorous.</p> <p>He said in order to resolve this issue the historical misconnections need to be resolved whether it is with sustainable drainage or a diversion to a water course. He also said that at Mogden there is a resilience project which is designed to make sure the works can cope with larger amounts of flow so they can use the storm tanks less.</p> <p>R Cadbury (MP) commented that it is a large issue in itself and B Edwards (MRAG) said that population growth is the most important factor.</p>		
	<p>M Edwards (MRAG) said he has spoken to LBH and they have agreed that he join their inspections on site and asked Dina to facilitate this.</p>	Action	
	<p>R Aylard (TW) closed the meeting at 19.34pm</p>		

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