

QUEENBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Queenborough Town Council **Environment Committee** held on **Monday 9th January 2023** in the Committee Room at 44 High Street, Queenborough at 19.00

ALL MINUTES ARE WATERMARKED 'DRAFT' AND REMAIN A DRAFT COPY UNTIL THEY ARE AGREED AT THE NEXT RELEVANT COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE MEETING.

Present: Councillors Shiel, Telford, Fowle, Darby, Flew, Stockbridge, Marchington, Swarbrick

Public members seven, all residents of Castlemere Avenue, Queenborough.

The Clerk to Queenborough Town Council, Lisa Grandsen.

Councillor Sandra Fowle is Chairperson of the Environment Committee for 2022/2023.

1. Apologies received: Cllr Cameron Beart (unwell)

2. Declaration of Interests: Cllr Paula Telford at Item 3 as a resident living in Castlemere Avenue, Queenborough and being affected by the raw sewage flooding. Cllr Zoe Stockbridge as a Director of Handy Prints at item 9 and 10.

3. Southern Water representatives Regional Ops Manager and Field Performance Manager

Regards to the raw sewage flooding at Castlemere Avenue area of Queenborough. Scoot Pring and Jack Allen had been invited to the meeting this evening and letters of invite had been hand delivered to all Castlemere residents.

Scoot Pring Regional Ops Manager and Jack Allen Field Performance Manager for Southern Water introduced themselves to the Council.

They had been invited to tonight's meeting for answers to the long-standing raw sewage flooding of homes and gardens in Castlemere Avenue area.

Reports from Residents and Councillors

- . Raw sewage has occurred eleven times to property along Castlemere Avenue including homes, gardens and the car park.
- . Repeated excuses have been received from Southern Water of electric failure and pumping station failure.
- . August 2022 saw two workmen attend a drain in Castlemere Avenue Car Park to install two alert triggers to go off should the system fail. The workmen could not complete installation, as they reported they required three workmen to do the work required, they have not been back to install and since then further raw sewage flooding has occurred.

- . A Southern Water employee living in Dumergue Avenue was praised for his response and out of hours work in dealing with flooding issues, this is not his responsibility.
- . Flooding has occurred here, since 1979.
- . Question: why can it not be diverted into the sea than into people's homes?
- . Previous emails sent from residents to Scoot Pring at Southern Water have gone unanswered.
- . It was reported that no one in Southern Water returns calls or answers emails to residents.
- . It is not the drains that are the problem, it is the pumping station.
- . Overall lack of empathy from Southern Water for Castlemere residents.
- . Mechanical and electrical design of pumping station cannot guarantee it will not happen.
- . Promised this would stop by Southern Water years ago when the local MP became involved.
- . Lack of maintenance and investment at pumping station.
- . Growth of local planning across the Island is a huge issue.
- . Why don't Southern Water report the system is 'struggling to cope' on planning applications ?
- . Cllr Marchington reported as a Swale Borough Councillor for fifteen years, he is knowledgeable about the Rushenden Pumping Station, problems are always caused from the station in Queenborough.
- . No money comes from developers across the Isle of Sheppey to Queenborough, to improve this pumping station.
- . Residents are compensated by Southern Water, though this is a very slow process.
- . One resident reporting he is paying six hundred pounds extra on home insurance because of the Southern Water continued raw sewage flooding.
- . Residents cannot sell their homes because the raw sewage flooding comes up on the survey.

Reply from Southern water.

- . Apologised, in saying it was not acceptable to be flooded once and totally unacceptable to be flooded as many times as residents have.
- . In November 2022, Southern Water lost communication to the pumping station and alerts did not go to 'Durrington'. It was a resident who raised the alarm to the Southern Water employee in the neighbouring street.
- . There was a problem with the control at the pumping station but there was no rain beforehand that day.
- . When waste and rainwater are combined it gives less time to react to problems.
- . Brielle Way pumps into Castlemere Avenue drains.
- . Rushenden Road pumping station, the alarm comes on the screen during out of hours, but Durrington staff do not know the area.
- . Southern Water appreciate the anxiety the public go through.
- . There is a quote for an inhibit in progress with the asset maintenance department, Scott and Jack are part of the operational department.
- . Drove Road, Wards Hill Road and Power Station Road pump into Castlemere Avenue drains.

- . Scott and Jack will provide their details as a point of contact for the future but calls for reporting flooding should still go through the customer services call centre for recording and action purposes.
- . Scott and Jack will take emails, phone calls or social media contact if this helps prevent the flooding and if needed this will be twenty-four hours a day.
- . The call centre has Castlemere as a level 4 , so should know the severity of occurrences.
- . Across the whole of Kent there are only four Southern Water personnel working out of hours
- . Pumping station resilience as possible can be. Wet well clean program happens three times a year, reducing the risk of the pumps blocking.
- . Every two weeks checks are carried out and defects raised.
- . Remotely check pumping station daily.
- . Risk is as low as it can be.
- . There is a storm tank at Scrapsgate Road, Minster.
- . Surface water and climate change are all playing a part in the flooding.
- . Southern Water cannot refuse connection to the system under planning.
- . Castlemere is the weakest link at the lowest point on the Isle of Sheppey.
- . Southern Water must report incidents to the Environment Agency.

Conclusion

Southern Water to be invited back to future Environment or Full Council meetings for updates.

To add their details to an appendix of the QTC Emergency Plan.

Southern Water representatives and members of the public (residents from Castlemere Avenue) left the meeting at 8pm

4. Public Questions: None

5. Minutes of the Meeting held on the 21st of November 2022

The minutes were then adopted as a true copy and signed by the Chairman.

6. Matters arising from previous meeting held on the 21st of November 2022 - None

7. Chair's Remarks

Cllr Fowle thanked everyone for coming, reporting it was good to see members of the public in attendance and speaking.

8. Stanley Avenue, Harold Street and Gordon Avenue garage area

With ongoing residents' reports of mechanical works being carried out in the area. Optivio have asked for details if known of the person carrying out such works. The Council will look further into supplying such details.

9. QTC Highways Improvement Plan

Correspondence on the plan was received by a High Street resident and reported to

the Committee by the Clerk.

Resident reporting, feedback from local fisherman that HGVs deliver fuel to the craft and there would need to be signs directing HGVs to use North Road, West Street to South Street if not the High Street.

The Mayor responded that no further signs were required as the 7.5t weight limit signs (except for access) would suffice for the HGVs delivering fuel via the High Street.

Councillors reviewed and agreed to amend the Highway Improvement plan as follows.

Item 4 (HGV traffic in Queenborough) was moved on the priority column up to number 2 in priority of importance.

Item 2 (white roadside planters) the land for placement is owned by KCC, adding 30 roundels to the planters to warn of the speed limit on Main Road.

Item 5 (extension of the 20mph for the whole town) repeater signs for Rushenden have been agreed by KCC along with the others placed in the town but never put up.

Item 6 (Historic Queenborough brown sign) the sign was removed by KCC and not but pack, can KCC raise an order for replacement.

Cllr Shiel has a sign for North Road, South Street and Thompsett Way which needs collecting and reinstating, despite several attempts from him to KCC this has not happened. **Action the Clerk**

10. Queenborough & Rushenden Information Brochure and map

The committee were unable to review, Handy Prints are still working on a proof. Updating that this should be ready for the next Full Council meeting.

11. Queenborough & Rushenden Information Board

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12. Reports from working parties.

a) Christmas Lights – it was a very good event. Cllr Shiel reporting there are five motifs that need replacing and some sockets are 15/20 years old requiring replacement.

Thank you to everyone for your hard work.

Cllr Marchington reported the tree lights at Queenborough Park had tripped after three days.

b) In Bloom – The Rushenden boat area will be tidied this week and Cllr Marchington offered his assistance in repairing the boat prior to planting up.

c) Allotments – The Clerk reported on the quietest month during her time working on the allotments.

d) Community Emergency Plan – Cllr Shiel reported he will add an appendix for Castlemere flooding.

e) Food Bank – Cllr Darby reporting the numbers requesting for help were going up. With Fareshare reporting that QTC Food Bank in the last 3 months have collected

85% of their Fareshare donations and in the last 30 days this had gone up to 100% this being a fantastic achievement, Fareshare are grateful for the commitment and hard work that goes into making sure that our surplus food donations are collected every week.

The Clerk reporting on being told that the food bank was looking to move premises, due to it outgrowing the Council area to the Chairman, Cllr Darby replying this was not the case.

13. Correspondence – an anonymous letter writer had sent a thank you to the Council for the Christmas Event.

14. Late inclusions – None

15. Any Other Business

Cllr Shiel shared the Arcfly idea for the Castle Site, costs will be obtained in the first instance by Cllr Fowle.

The noticeboard at Sterling Road still requires repair, one cost for material and one cost for labour had been received to date.

Cllr Telford thanked the Clerk for arranging the meeting with Southern Water, this evening and the Environment Committee members for their help tonight.

Cllr Fowle reported on the parking outside the new properties where the Queenborough Social Club stood, vehicles are on double yellow lines on the pavement. The Mayor reporting, he will speak with a resident in this regard.

Being no further business, the meeting closed at 20.50.

Date of next meeting: Monday 13th February 2023