

Minutes of the Liaison Meeting

Held at Crown Pet Foods

On Thursday 17th April at 18:30pm

Present:	Mrs J Cronie Chair	Ansford Parish Council
	Mr C Edwards	Ansford Parish Council
	Mr G Clothier	Ansford Parish Council
	Mrs H Merrifield	Ansford Parish Council
	Mr H Hobhouse	County & District Councillor
	Mr J Crossley	District Councillor
	Mr B Moorhouse	Castle Cary Town Council
	Mr A Jeffs	Castle Cary Town Council
	Mr J Hood	Castle Cary Town Council
	Miss L Tilling	Castle Cary Town Council
	Mr N Weeks	Castle Cary Town Council
	Mr A Gardiner	Environment Agency
	Mr B Payne	Environment Agency
	Mr A McIntyre	Entec
	Mr D Hall	Entec
	Mr E Lefeuvre	Crown Pet Foods (CPF)
	Mr F Demauge	Crown Pet Foods (CPF)
	Mr G Jefferson	Crown Pet Foods (CPF)
	Ms G Furniss	Crown Pet Foods (CPF)
	Mr E Williams	Somerset County Council
	Ms C Dorrell	Somerset County Council
	Ms L Scorer	South West of England Regional Development Agency
Apologies:	Mrs A Goodman	Ansford Parish Council
	Rev A Bond	Castle Cary Town Council
	Mr R Cox	Somerset Chamber of Commerce
	Dr G Stephenson	Somerset County Council
	Ms H Gloyn	Somerset County Council
	Mr A Chadwick	Crown Pet Foods (CPF)
In attendance:	Miss K Braunton	Minutes

1 **Introduction**

Mrs Cronie welcomed everyone to the meeting and Miss Braunton read through the apologies.

Mrs Cronie then asked if anyone had any comments about the minutes from the last meeting.

Mr Hood asked whether the minutes were the amended version (at section 5 paragraph 1), which everyone had seen.

Everybody was happy with the minutes from the last meeting.

2 **Emissions update**

Presented by Mr Payne from the Environment Agency.

The first slide of the presentation gave an update of the areas where odour is experienced. The areas affected represent the areas where the Environment Agency has received complaints from residents. The spread of the dots shown is bigger than the last update. The Environment Agency do not want to draw any conclusions from these results at the moment, as for example, people could have been out walking somewhere and smelt here, but then phoned the Environment Agency from their home. So this may not give a true representation of where the smell was actually detected.

Mr Payne then described the results on a slide showing odour assessment. Again, this was an update from the last meeting. The Environment Agency Officers are detecting strong odours in some places on one day, but these are not as strong on other days. Mr Payne said that he cannot comment on different people's perception. But the officers are reporting that at times the odour is at a level that someone might find offensive. Mr Payne made it clear that the slide showed the Environment Agency's independent view. These are daily checks carried out by the Environment Agency.

Mr Payne then said that the Environment Agency have asked Crown Pet Foods to look at short term methods of odour reduction until the long term plans are in place.

Mrs Cronie then asked whether Crown Pet Foods are still producing the hypoallergenic foods?

Mr Demauge commented by saying that they are producing two products currently, called Hypo Dog and Supercroc. Crown Pet Foods stopped production of the product range James Wellbeloved Turkey & Rice to minimise odour emissions. This stopped on the 10th March. They have since produced on one day in order to assess odour emission.

Mr Moorhouse then asked whether Crown Pet Foods have extended hours of production to 24 hours?

Mr Demauge commented to say that production hours are from 6am -10pm.

Mr Hood then asked about the enforcement notice and Crown Pet Foods appeal against it.

Mr Payne commented that a notice was served and the purpose of this was to check whether the equipment used by Crown Pet Foods was working properly, that staff

were fully trained to use it and to ensure compliance. The deadline for the notice was the 21st March and a lot of the information that the Environment Agency needed had been provided to them and they were happy with this. An appeal was made by Crown Pet Foods and Mr Payne said that he could not discuss the appeal, but that it was not impeding both companies working together and that they had moved onto other areas to work on to find a solution to the current problem. Mr Payne explained that it was not unusual for two companies to get into such legal debates. The notice cannot be enforced as it currently stands, but anyway events have begun to overtake the notice.

Mr Hood then said that in his view the notice did not refer to the equipment but the emissions, which has not been resolved. While Crown Pet foods try to find an alternative solution, it is the community who are suffering.

Mr Payne wanted to make it clear that the enforcement notice was about the equipment and Crown Pet Foods have responded to this in a number of ways, like ensuring that their staff are appropriately trained.

Mr Hood then said that Crown Pet Foods have not met expectations about the emissions and how long will this take to investigate?

Mr Payne responded by saying that they are looking into this daily.

Mr Hood then said that he was ringing the Environment Agency to make comments about the odour twice weekly. If the Environment Agency cannot help, there must be other resources available.

Mr Gardiner then reiterated that the enforcement notice was designed to ensure that the equipment was working correctly. If it was working properly, then this should help to minimise odour emissions. Crown Pet Foods have demonstrated that they are complying with this, but there are still problems that need to be resolved. The Environment Agency are working on this issue with Crown Pet Foods. It cannot be said that the problem will be resolved tomorrow though.

Mr Hood then commented that the local community will therefore have to suffer until the end of July until the other technologies are in place.

Mr Gardiner said that they are looking into short term solutions to help in the meantime. They are working very hard on this subject.

Mr Hood then asked whether a definition could be given to 'short term'.

Mr Gardiner commented by saying that they are looking into solutions to help until the end of July. Short term solutions include the way the flow goes through the equipment, can we make it travel through one system, increase speed of flow so that the air goes up higher etc. They are looking at these options at the moment.

Mr Demauge then said that Crown Pet Foods are working on a daily basis on these issues. He wanted to apologise if local people are finding the odour difficult on a daily basis and sees himself as 'a guy to work with people', for example from the Environment Agency and the local community to minimise the odour emissions. Mr Demauge is fully committed to work on these issues, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The company are also working with independent experts to give advice on this subject. That will not stop whatever the results – Crown Pet Foods wants to do its best to minimise odours and be a good neighbour.

Mr Hood then commented that initially lots of people call the Environment Agency

when there is an odour issue, but they may get tired of phoning in the long term. Could this mistakenly be seen as a reduction in odour emissions?

Mr Payne said that their Officers do an independent check and check whether initiatives taken by Crown Pet Foods are working.

Mr Weeks then asked what would happen if we get to the end of July and there is still a problem?

Mr Demauge said that he will give a response to this question during his presentation.

Mr Weeks then asked why there were strangers around the table and asked for them to be introduced.

Mr Demauge first introduced Mr Hall and Mr McIntyre from Entec, who are the independent experts that are working with Crown Pet Foods. They are helping to assess odour emissions and advise on strategies to minimise odour as far as possible. Sniffing is carried out by the Environment Agency and Crown Pet Foods. Entec also take samples of odours before and after the odour abatement system in place to see how effective it is.

Mr Williams then introduced himself as the team leader for Animal Health & Welfare with Somerset County Council. He deals with animal by-products. Mr Williams also introduced his colleague, Ms Dorrell, who specialises in animal food stuffs. He explained that they were invited by Crown Pet Foods and attended to see if there was anything that they could do to help as they have dealt with similar situations before.

Mr Edwards then asked if there have been similar problems in other factories?

Mr Demauge commented to say that they have not experienced such complaints in other production facilities. They are working with the best possible techniques available. The company at a group level are working very hard as they have never been in a similar situation elsewhere. The current odour abatement system here is the same used in other production facilities.

Mr Hood then asked if the other factories have the same system, why is there a problem here and mentioned that perhaps it was due to the location of the plant relative to the town?

Mr Demauge commented to say that odour emissions are dependent on many things, such as weather and terrain for example. These are different from one plant to another as they are located in different areas.

Mr Hood then recalled that a previous councillor, Emma Bourne, took the opportunity to visit France to see a Royal Canin plant and came back to say that the smell was unbearable.

Mr Demauge commented to say that the odour was not perceived to be offensive in France.

Mr Hobhouse asked about a map shown in the Environment Agency presentation which showed wind direction relative to complaints.

Mr Payne showed the map slide and commented that there was a direct correlation between wind direction and the number of complaints. Western range seems to get more complaints.

General comments were made around the room that the map showed that one

particular week showed more complaints than others and it was noted that this coincided with the Easter holiday.

Mr Weeks then asked who was the other stranger in the room.

Ms Scorer introduced herself as the Enterprise Manager for Somerset & Devon for the South West of England Regional Development Agency. She was invited to attend by Crown Pet Foods and was present to observe and to see if the South West of England RDA could offer advice.

Mr Moorhouse then commented that the problem here is the difference between expectation and reality. The general impression by the community was that there would be no or minimal odour. But the reality is that even with the best available equipment it appears that there will still be some odour.

Mr Demauge commented that he could never promise that there will be no odour at all. Think of the production facility as a large-scale kitchen, which will obviously produce some cooking smell. The important thing is the next steps that Crown Pet Foods are taking, but it is not an easy task. Mr Demauge promised it is his personal commitment to reduce the odour as much as possible with all possible technologies, but it cannot be said that say there will be no smell at all.

Mrs Cronie commented that it would be important to try and convince the community that we are not gaining anything by looking back; we have to look to the future.

Mr Hood then said that he can recall that comments were made at a meeting at the beginning that there would be no smell.

Mr Demauge said that he personally had never said there would be no smell at all.

Mr Crossley concluded that the updated position is that the odour is still not at a level acceptable by the community.

Miss Tilling then asked whether the complaints, which have been part of the initial stages, are still of use? Does it help the process?

Mr Payne said that residents' complaints do help. It is useful to know times and sites where the smell is worst. There is a possible issue that people may get tired of complaining, which needs to be looked into. There are still a lot of complaints. The Environment Agency has a 24-hour control room and they are finding that they struggle to deal with the number of complaints coming through. They are trying to think of other ways of collecting complaint data and Mr Gardiner asked if anyone had any ideas. He suggested that some regular callers could log when they noticed a smell (date, time, area etc) on a weekly basis. This may help them too.

Mrs Cronie wanted to comment that from conversations that she has had with the Environment Agency in the past, it is clear that they do everything by the law to make sure that they do not jeopardise anything for the future.

Mr Gardiner wanted to thank Mrs Cronie for that comment and said that he really hoped that the issues will be resolved by the date in July.

3 Planned next steps

Presented by Mr Hall From Entec.

Mr Hall introduced himself and his colleague Mr McIntyre. He mentioned that Mr

Demaugé had asked him to talk through the role of Entec and what they are doing with the emission data that they are collecting.

Entec is a multidisciplinary consultancy offering both a breadth and depth of service to provide commercial and technically robust business solutions. They have over 60 years experience in consultancy and have a wide range of skills. Advise a number of industries including Private Industry, Petrochemical, Water Industry, Environment Agency, Local Authorities. They are routinely trusted to give advice on odour.

There are two main documents that they use, which are the Environment Agency's H4 guidance for odour. Contained within these documents are tools for EIA (environmental impact assessment).

Emissions can be measured and samples analysed by people; carried out to British Standard.

Mr Hall explained that APP stands for Applied Plasma Physics and is a system used in odour abatement.

Mr Hall presented slides which showed that the James Wellbloved Turkey and Rice product range that Crown Pet Foods were initially producing gave noticeable odours. Lower odorous products included the Supercroc and Hypo Dog product ranges.

Mr Hall explained that a trial was conducted to monitor the emissions from the Supercroc product range at 7tph (tonnes per hour) and 5.2 tph. The results showed that production of Supercroc at 5.2 tph reduced odour emission significantly.

Mr Hall explained that buildings can have a major impact on emissions and so they have included the way the buildings are situated into the environmental model. This is routinely used around the world and is not a new concept. Terrain data from Ordnance Survey has also been used. Including all of this information gives a good representation of the situation.

Mr Hall explained that they obtain dispersion Met data from Yeovilton airfield (the closest measure of data to Castle Cary). Also assume the factory is producing 24 hours a day 7 days a week, although this is not the case.

Mr Hall then showed data of predicted concentrations of odour for all product ranges. For example, where there would be a concentration at residential receptors of a unit of odour (Mr Payne added that this was the level at which 50% of the panel would detect the odour). Odour was reduced for Supercroc 7@ tph compared to James Wellbloved T&R and Supercroc 5.2 @ tph was reduced further still.

Mr Weeks commented that the map appeared to be misdirected.

Mr Hall explained that the term 'Northing' was a geographical term applied to maps.

Mr Hood commented that odour constituents are made up of volatile components, so there must be other ways of measuring odour rather than using people's noses. For example, using GLC (Gas Liquid Chromatography) you should be able to know odour strength.

Mr Hall commented that the problem with this is that odours can have a synergistic or antagonistic effect upon each other and so the result is different to smelling up the

nose, which is what people perceive.

Mr Hobhouse asked why Yeovilton was used as the wind testing area as the wind for this area comes up from the levels, not from Yeovil.

Mr Hall said that this was another area that they could look into.

Mr Hall then continued with his presentation to show that the predicted concentrations of odour at residential receptors were very low for the Hypo Dog product range.

Mr Hood asked what is Hypo Dog?

Mr Demauge went on to explain that Hypo Dog is for dogs with specific allergies and according to sniffing data and other analysis this product produces the lowest odour so now they are only producing this product range or the Supercroc at 5.2tph, which has very low odour emissions too as shown in the slides presented by Mr Hall.

Mr Crossley then asked whether the number of complaints went down when using these products?

Mr Payne explained that the complaints actually went up, but the Environment Agency could not necessarily make a direct correlation between these complaints and how effective the steps taken were.

Miss Tilling said that obviously the more evidence they collect in regards to this particular theory will show whether it actually helps.

Mr Hobhouse mentioned that the wind patterns are odd around this area and during monitoring of the incinerator at Dimmer they spent a long time trying to find where the odours dropped. He then asked whether this had been done with the odours from Crown Pet Foods?

Mr Hall answered by saying that they have not measured the weight of the odour, but have conducted similar tests.

Mr Weeks then asked what are the chances that the turkey mix will get to the level of Hypo Dog?

Mr Hall said that they are currently testing in France this week. There is no data available yet, but it seems to be going well. Have to wait for results to have definite answers.

4 Crown Pet Foods Action Plan

Presented by Mr Demauge.

Mr Demauge started by saying that odour emissions are a very complex subject and that Crown Pet Foods takes their environmental responsibilities very seriously. He went on to mention that he hopes that everyone understands that Crown Pet Foods is a responsible and responsive company. For example, they listen to residents' complaints and have responded by monitoring the odour by sniffing and modelling. They take all the information they can get. Crown Pet Foods works with people not against people. There is no solution if we do not work together.

Mr Demauge explained that the first action Crown Pet Foods took was to stop production of the most odorous product – T&R. They are now producing the lowest

odorous product – Supercroc product range – producing at a lower rate that we could do. For example, instead of driving at 70 mph, driving at 50 mph. Also producing Hypo Dog as previously mentioned.

Mr Demauge explained that Entec are given the freedom to come onto the site when they want to take twice weekly measurements in order to get the best possible analysis. The sniffing trials represent what the community of Castle Cary are doing on a daily basis. Crown Pet Foods are also doing their own sniffing twice a day at a range of locations, which have been agreed with the Environment Agency.

Mr Demauge also said that Crown Pet Foods are running trials with the approval of the Environment Agency. The current trial is to run all emissions through 1 APP only in order to increase the speed going through the system (increase the velocity). The next steps are to monitor whether the fact that the flow is quicker will enable the APP to 'kill' the odour as well as if it was going slower – results are expected soon. Also a plan to monitor following reduction in stack diameter to increase flow velocity.

Mr Demauge explained that the next steps in terms of action are to install a Condenser and Carbon Filter. The Condenser will decrease the steam temperature to ensure that the Carbon Filter works at maximum efficiency and the Carbon Filter absorbs odour molecules through its highly porous activated carbon.

Mr Crossley mentioned that obviously this filter will need to be changed periodically. Mr Demauge confirmed that this was correct.

Mr Hobhouse mentioned that the technology is similar to that used in most cars to stop chemicals coming into the car and also in some domestic appliances.

Mr Demauge continued to say that it will not be an easy job to put the Carbon Filter into the tower as it is very heavy. The company are working with suppliers to find the best ways of installing the Carbon Filter. The technology will be monitored in the French factory to check the efficiency of the system.

Mr Demauge said that Crown Pet Foods are implementing the best proven techniques to achieve maximum odour abatement and the expected date of completion is 31st July 2008.

Mr Jeffs asked whether this means that until the 31st July will the factory not be doing its full production?

Mr Demauge confirmed that until 31st July, the production facility will only work with the lowest odour products.

Mr Demauge went on to say that he wants to work with the people of Castle Cary to do the best they can do, but cannot promise no odour – will be the lowest possible odour.

Mr Hood commented that the best that Crown Pet Foods can do is to stop producing until the new technologies are in place.

Mr Demauge responded by saying that actually this would be the worst thing that he could do as he would have to say to 167 staff that they are not producing anymore. Mr Demauge wants to work together to maintain odour level as low as possible while continuing to employ the staff.

Mr Hood then asked where was Crown Pet Foods producing before they came to Castle Cary?

Mr Demauge responded by saying that they were importing some products and others were produced in the North of England, near Manchester.

Mr Crossley commented that the town is getting a reputation as being a smelly town and this needs to be resolved. Mr Crossley suggested that a public meeting would be a good idea to communicate with the local residents.

Mr Demauge responded by saying that this comment leads onto the next subject that he wanted to raise at this meeting.

5 Communication

Mr Demauge introduced Glenn Jefferson who will take over from Mr Lefeuvre as Factory Director.

Mr Demauge then commented that Crown Pet Foods needs to speak for themselves and he would be the first one to say that communication from Crown Pet Foods has not been good enough. Focus was put on the technical issues faced by Crown Pet Foods and there was not enough explanation of what was happening. Mr Demauge explained that he has been working closely with Ms Furniss (who has worked with CPF for many years) to improve communication. Mr Demauge then introduced the new Crown Pet Foods community newsletter.

Mr Demauge explained that he understands that the community do not know who Crown Pet Foods are, so the newsletter is designed to answer some questions residents have; for example, Who are Crown Pet Foods?, What do they do?, Dates for your diary, What do they make?, What are the ingredients used?, what is in place and planned for odour abatement with the expected completion date. This newsletter will be delivered to residents' homes today and tomorrow.

Mr Demauge explained that Mr Hobhouse visited Crown Pet Foods recently and told him that he was doing a good job, but the town were not aware of this. As soon as Mr Hobhouse left, they started to work on a newsletter, so Mr Demauge thanked Mr Hobhouse for the idea.

Mr Weeks then said that he understood that the plan was to go to 24 hour production, is this still the plan?

Mr Demauge mentioned that there would be no point in increasing production when people are saying that the best thing that you can do is to stop production completely.

Mr Weeks referred to a question he asked earlier in the meeting - what would be the plan if we get to the end of July after the new technologies are in place and there is still a problem?

Mr Demauge commented that the plan would be to prepare. Entec know the technology as they have been working with it for a while in other circumstances. Trials are being conducted in France with the Carbon Filter.

Miss Tilling commented that perhaps the Environment Agency could answer the question?

Mr Gardiner said that they will work closely with Crown Pet Foods to check whether they have complied with the permit. It would be a very serious matter to go down the line of suspension.

Mr Weeks mentioned that the situation is very difficult within the town itself, for example with the smelly Cary leaflets, how can this be resolved? Many people around the table have been affected as their houses could be devalued. Need to give the community something to hold onto. The smelly Cary image is very damaging.

Mr Payne said that they focus on the situation on a daily basis. With the warmer weather coming, the expected completion date of 31st July is not really good enough. Hence the request for short-term actions. He stated that he has been provided with locally unprecedented levels of resources to keep the pace up on this project.

Mr Gardiner also commented that they are continually looking to see if there is anything else that they can discuss with Crown Pet Foods. Some things may work, others may not.

Mr Moorhouse asked whether Crown Pet Foods have tried using the two APP's in series rather than parallel?

Mr Demauge said that this could be a possibility which he would investigate.

Miss Tilling asked Mr Demauge when they will be trying the next steps?

Mr Demauge responded by saying that he is having discussions with the Environment Agency in order to determine the best times to try things.

Miss Tilling then said that they need to know when the next step will happen.

Mr Demauge said that every time there is a new step and approval of the Environment Agency, they will put this on the Crown Pet Foods website as well as job vacancies to keep people instantly updated.

Mr Crossley mentioned that the newsletter is great, but he would like Mr Demauge to stand up in public to tell them what he has just described.

Mr Demauge agreed to this concept.

Mrs Cronie suggested that Caryford Hall would be a good venue as using Crown Pet Foods would not be a suitable place.

Mrs Cronie will speak with Mr Demauge to find the most suitable dates for this. Mrs Cronie suggested that an evening meeting would work well on a Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday.

It was decided that just before the last bank holiday in May might be a good time, but Mrs Cronie will discuss with Mr Demauge. Mr Demauge also commented that he would like the meeting to take place once he has received results of the current trials.

Mr Gardiner commented that when ideas have been suggested to Mr Demauge and Mr Lefeuvre, they have taken them onboard.

Mr Moorhouse then mentioned that no one has any doubts as to the commitments of

Crown Pet Foods. But the town are very cynical and there is a general perception that they are not getting enough communication/feedback.

Mr Demauge reiterated that he admits that communication has not been good enough and that their focus was on the technical issues and how to solve the problems. Mr Demauge confirmed his commitment to fit into the community in the best possible way.

Mr Weeks said that he felt that there was not the right level of planning help in regards to this issue from the beginning. There should have been more help at that stage.

6 Open Day

Mr Demauge again acknowledged the lack of communication, but wants to invite residents to an open day on 6th September. This would be an opportunity for residents to visit the site, see the production facility and meet with Crown Pet Foods staff. More information will be in the newsletter and invitations nearer the date.

Mr Demauge wanted to mention that the newsletter was not a one off and will be a regular issue.

Mrs Cronie confirmed that she had already put some ideas for the Open Day to Ms Furniss and they will discuss this in more detail on another occasion.

Ms Furniss wanted to ask for any feedback regarding the newsletter to help develop the next issue.

7 Employment

Mr Demauge gave updated figures on the current employment:

Crown Pet Foods currently employs 167 people; 86 people work at the Castle Cary site; 70 of these live locally.

Mr Demauge then mentioned about two current vacancies within the company, which are Packing Operator / Fork Lift Truck Driver and BI & IT Support Technician.

Mr Demauge also explained that they are implementing 3 new full time apprenticeships and are encouraging applications from pupils of local schools (Ansford School for example).

Mr Demauge confirmed again that this information will also be available on the Crown Pet Foods website and other vacancies will be posted on there as they arise.

8 Any Other Business

None

9 Date for the next meeting

Date: Thursday 5th June

Time: 18:30pm

Venue: Crown Pet Foods.

It was suggested that monthly meetings would be a good idea until the end of July.

The meeting closed at 20:39pm.