

## Minutes of the Liaison Meeting

### Held at Crown Pet Foods

On Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2008

Present:	Mrs J Cronie Chair	Ansford Parish Council
	Mr G Clothier	Ansford Parish Council
	Mrs H Merrifield	Ansford Parish Council
	Mr H Hobhouse	County & District Councillor
	Mr B Moorhouse	Castle Cary Town Council
	Mr N Weeks	Castle Cary Town Council
	Mr C Tew	Environment Agency
	Mr B Payne	Environment Agency
	Mr F Demauge	Crown Pet Foods
	Mr G Jefferson	Crown Pet Foods

Apologies:	Mr A Chadwick	Crown Pet Foods
	Ms G Furniss	Crown Pet Foods
	Mr C Edwards	Ansford Parish Council
	Mr John Crossley	District Councillor
	Mr T Philpott	Castle Cary Town Council
	Mr J Hood	Castle Cary Town Council
	Miss L Tilling	Castle Cary Town Council
	Mr K Hobson	Castle Cary Town Council
	Rev A Bond	Castle Cary Town Council
	Mr A Gardiner	Environment Agency
	Mr R Marlow	Environment Agency

In attendance:	Miss K Braunton	Minutes
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### **1 Introduction**

Mrs Cronie welcomed everyone to the September liaison meeting and said that there were a lot of apologies; she did not read them out, but said that anyone could see the list if they wanted.

Mrs Cronie then asked if everyone had seen the minutes of the last meeting, which everyone had done and had no comments to add.

## 2 Environment Agency Update

Mr Payne began his update by showing a graph of the complaints made since the new equipment was switched on the 11<sup>th</sup> August. Since the 11<sup>th</sup> August, the Environment Agency has received only 14 complaints from 9 properties. In some cases, the Environment Agency officers have been out to assess the odour and thought that it may in fact be from other sources. Perhaps the odour from Crown Pet Foods was actually masking other odours.

Mr Payne showed another graph relating to the checks carried out by the Environment Agency and showed a step by step change since the 11<sup>th</sup> August. Only one moderate odour was attributed to Crown Pet Foods and strong odour detection had been eliminated. Mr Payne said that the Environment Agency team will continue to carry out inspections twice a week during the commissioning period. Mr Payne also said that the Environment Agency is in a happy position as a regulator.

Mr Moorhouse asked whether the products being produced are the same as before. Mr Payne said that different products have been produced during this period and even some products which are expected to give a higher odour level. This is showing that the new system is working well even with the higher odour products.

Mr Payne said that the next stage is to allow higher production levels. The Environment Agency will work closely with Crown Pet Foods to monitor this. The new equipment is being independently verified by a company that the Environment Agency would use themselves and they have reported that the system is working well so Mr Payne said that he has no concerns about moving on to the next phase.

Mr Weeks then asked how long the carbon filter can be used for and as it gets older will it become less effective?

Mr Payne said that Crown Pet Foods will be looking into this as part of their long term plan. The Environment Agency has built regulations into the variation permit which Crown Pet Foods will follow to determine the answers to these questions. There will be discussions over the next few months looking at the life of the carbon filter long term. Mr Payne said that now the first phase is complete, the next phase is to look at the long term strategy and work on the odour management plan.

Mr Hobhouse said that he thought that the life of the carbon filter was 12 months. Mr Demauge confirmed this, but because the condenser is working even more efficiently than expected this means that the carbon filter may last longer. The condenser is taking away a lot of the soluble odours before they reach the carbon filter. This is good because in addition to a reduced maintenance cost it is likely that the carbon filter will last a long time. It is also beneficial as changing the carbon is a huge job as the filter is right at the top of the tower and there is 18 cubic metres of carbon!

Mr Demauge continued to say that Crown Pet Foods will manage the odour abatement system to ensure that the carbon is changed before the filter reaches its full capacity.

Mr Weeks asked if the factory will continue to produce while the carbon is changed? Mr Demauge confirmed that the factory will not produce while the carbon is being

replaced as under no circumstances does he want things to go back to how it was before the additional odour abatement system was in place.

Mr Demauge then thanked the Environment Agency for all their hard work and also thanked the community. He said that the Royal Canin UK factory case is being taken very seriously within the Royal Canin group and is being looked at as a case study for the other factories.

Mrs Cronie asked whether there was anything that could be built into the carbon filter to show when it was reaching its full capacity, a warning light for example.

Mr Demauge said that unfortunately this was technically impossible. He confirmed that they are conducting tests in order to be able to better predict the life of the carbon filter. The system is working so well that they cannot smell anything at the filter.

Mr Demauge confirmed that replacement of the carbon filter will take about 2 days.

Mr Payne said that the liaison meetings will be a good way of communicating the monitoring of the carbon filter and its long term management.

Mr Payne continued to say that the Environment Agency will be investigating the 14 complaints and this is normal procedure with any new installation. Mr Payne confirmed that he had not expected the new system to work as well as it has done.

Mr Moorhouse said that as the complaints have dropped so much, it must show that the complaints before the new equipment was installed were genuine.

Mr Payne agreed that the reports from the community were genuine and were very helpful.

Mr Payne continued to say that the Environment Agency will now review what went well during this process, what did not go so well and will review their strategy and actions.

Mr Moorhouse thanked the Environment Agency for representing the community so well and listening to their concerns.

Mrs Cronie said that she was pleased to read comments in the local press from SOS Cary which were more positive now.

Mr Moorhouse also thanked Crown Pet Foods. He said that they did not arrive with the best reputation, but they had really worked hard to sort out the problems.

Mr Tew commented about the successful use of the technology. This needs to be relayed to other parts of the organisation as it worked so well in this case and could be beneficial elsewhere. If a better technology has been found then it needs to be added into other policies.

Mr Hobhouse mentioned that the biofilter at Dimmer Dump is a good use of technology too, although he added that this system does not work well on a Monday.

Mr Weeks suggested to the Environment Agency that in future they need to speak to the planning agencies about new projects at the very beginning. Mr Weeks thought that this particular situation could have been stopped before it had even started. Mr

Weeks did not want to suggest that he wanted future projects to be prevented, but thought that this experience could be used to improve the progress of future projects and make matters more acceptable for all concerned.

Mr Payne said that Mr Weeks' suggestions were good, but that there are only certain stages of the planning process where the Environment Agency can take part. Mr Payne recalled a situation though where a colleague shared learnings from the Crown Pet Foods case with the senior manager of another project, which greatly helped. This shows that communication of this experience is important to help with other projects.

Mr Weeks said that more information would have been better for Mr Demauge too as he could have made decisions at the planning stage based on previous learnings from other projects.

Mr Demauge said that this was true and he just wants the best for the situation. He said that the move to Castle Cary could have been very different with the focus on positive aspects, such as employment.

Mr Weeks said that the Town Council will write to the council offices in Yeovil, reminding them to consider these issues before spending tax payers' money.

Mrs Cronie said that we should not look back and should just look forward now. She hoped that the planning department has improved and recalled her experience of the first meeting, which was appalling. No matter what points were raised, the planning committee seemed to have already decided that planning permission would be granted; we can just use this experience to move forward.

Mr Tew commented that there were lessons to learn at their level too. He talked about the political approval to stand outside of their remit and said that they have started to make inroads into planning. He mentioned making improvements for the future to get the political approval to go ahead with things and not to place too many hurdles in the way.

### **3 Production Facility Update**

Mr Jefferson said that there was not much more to add to the odour update given already unless anyone had any further questions.

Mr Moorhouse asked about the time scales for increasing production tonnage and full mix?

Mr Jefferson said that they were increasing the tonnage between now and next April. He said that they are still carrying out trials but that during the next 5 weeks they will increase the throughput.

Mr Demauge added that the plan for next year is that the factory will produce 20,000 tonnes. There was a period of time when the factory staff slowed down production and did not to change from one product to another but now with the full understanding of the Environment Agency they can increase production. Mr Demauge said that they want to ensure that this happens in a safe way with the staff fully trained to accelerate production – step by step.

Mr Moorhouse mentioned that the planning application was for 60,000 tonnes as the maximum capacity and asked whether this will ever be reached.

Mr Demauge said that in order to make 60,000 tonnes, they would need to introduce another extrusion line. There is no plan to include another extrusion line in 2009, so this will not happen yet.

Mr Demauge confirmed that the factory will be dedicated to producing products sold in the UK to help reduce the carbon footprint.

Mr Demauge explained that James Wellbeloved products will be stored initially in the Crown Pet Foods warehouse and then will go to Framptons at Shepton Mallet. Royal Canin products will go directly to Framptons, or directly from France to the wholesaler. Mr Demauge explained VMI (Vendor Managed Inventory), which is implemented with Centaur Services for example, where they receive products direct from France; this is working very well and is managed by the logistics department within Crown Pet Foods.

Mr Jefferson then showed a copy of the lorry drivers' handbook that he mentioned during the last meeting. He has worked closely with Nicky Creed to put the handbook together. The handbook is given to the drivers and gives clear instructions on permissible access roads to and from the site, and opening times. Mr Jefferson also explained that he has driven around the route shown on the map but it is not always clear where to go, so the next stage is to put up some signs to make the route even clearer.

Mr Hobhouse offered his help to Mr Jefferson when dealing with the Highways Agency.

Mr Jefferson thanked Mr Hobhouse. He also said that the handbook will be in a number of different languages, although most drivers are bilingual.

#### **4 Lighting**

Mr Jefferson said that he wanted to communicate progress following comments at the last meeting about lighting. There were two issues about the lighting; 1, the bright lights at the main entrance and 2, lighting in the car park.

Mr Hobhouse also wanted to add a third point and said that there is an issue with the lighting affecting residents in Clanville to the back of the factory. Mr Hobhouse said that even though the light direction has been changed, there is still a problem.

Mr Jefferson said that he had not been made aware of this issue and thanked Mr Hobhouse for bringing it to his attention. Mr Jefferson continued to say that the company has bought a light meter and next Tuesday they are going to assess the lighting in its full state after dark. Mr Jefferson said that of course, if they can reduce the lighting they will.

Mr Hobhouse mentioned that this would be cheaper for the company too!

Mr Jefferson agreed and said that once they have made the adjustments they will ask for feedback again to assess it further.

Mr Demauge added that as the lighting needed obviously changes at different times

of the year this needs to be monitored and altered regularly too. Mr Demauge said that this will be looked at with the same professionalism to make improvements, and of course taking into account their neighbours comments when possible.

Mrs Cronie suggested that the measures to improve the lighting should be discussed in the next Community Matters newsletter so that people know that this is being addressed by Crown Pet Foods. Mrs Cronie said that one person suggested to her that Crown Pet Foods should put out every second light. Mrs Cronie also mentioned that saving energy is important to a lot of people these days.

Mr Jefferson confirmed that 8 lights are out at the moment, but said that they will have to put these on again next Tuesday to review the lighting in its full capacity. Mr Jefferson said that they will react very quickly to there findings.

Mr Weeks suggested having light sensors for different areas, which come on only when people walk near them.

Mr Jefferson said that this is something that they could look into.

Mr Weeks then said that he has read the planning specification for lighting on the site and was surprised that it was not 'dark skies friendly lighting'. He said that in this modern age, he was surprised that the number of lights planned for were allowed. He said that he knew that this was not Crown Pet Foods fault as they just requested the number of lights that they were allowed, and he mentioned that Crown Pet Foods even took the heads off some lights which were not needed.

Mr Payne said that he had spoken with Mr Hobhouse before about the dark skies lighting initiative and said that this is a point that can be worked on in the future.

Mr Weeks said that he had mentioned this initiative at the initial planning meeting, but it was not taken on board. Mr Weeks thought that the lighting on this site is terrible, particularly for a small market town. He concluded by saying that if the lighting ever needed to be changed on the site, then Crown Pet Foods should consider the dark skies lighting initiative.

Mr Demauge thanked Mr Weeks for the suggestion.

Mrs Merrifield mentioned that South Somerset District Council have won several awards for the dark skies initiative in their own offices, so she was surprised that it is not used in many other planning applications that they are involved with.

Mr Weeks agreed with this point.

Mr Demauge concluded the matter by saying that they will try to find a solution for the lighting as soon as possible, especially as it will soon be winter.

## **5 Crown Pet Foods Open Day Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> September**

Mr Weeks and Mrs Cronie both said that they felt that the open day went very well.

Mr Demauge confirmed that 398 people attended. He was delighted with the number of people and felt that the atmosphere on the day was very good. Many people seemed surprised to see the way a pet food production facility works.

Mr Demauge felt that it was a good opportunity to meet with the community in a

friendly way and felt that the day was good for everyone in terms of communication. For example, Mr Demauge recalled that in the beginning it should have been communicated why the production facility needs such a large tower. It was useful at the open day to be able to explain that the size is necessary for the gravity-led extrusion process used to make the kibbles.

Mr Demauge said that there were some written questions raised by residents on the day, all of which have been replied to.

Mr Demauge also mentioned that it was a pleasure to welcome someone from the Environment Agency to the open day. He was not obliged to come, but attended with his family, which was really appreciated.

Mr Weeks said that he felt the day went well, and that was judging the day by the tour as he did not even have the hog roast!

Mrs Cronie said that she heard no negative comments on the day or since then either, which is very encouraging.

Mrs Cronie also wanted to thank the Environment Agency for their hard work in getting to this point too.

## **6 Any Other Business**

Mr Moorhouse asked what was happening with the landscaping on the site?

Mr Demauge said that they will put grass in front of the warehouse now it is completed, although there are many stones which need to be removed first.

Mr Demauge mentioned that the tulip trees at the front are not thriving and that he is not particularly happy with them as they are not local trees (but this stems back to the original planning application). Mr Demauge confirmed that every tree that has not rooted will be removed and replaced with a tree of the same height more suited to the terrain.

Mr Demauge also said that he wanted to give the opportunity for Crown Pet Foods staff and their families to visit the site so a similar open day will be held for staff and their families on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> September. As part of this day, everyone will be welcome to plant some daffodil bulbs so that the site will have lots of daffodils in the Spring. There will be a gardener present on the day to make sure that the planting is done correctly!

Mr Tew also wanted to add that during his odour surveys he has experienced no odour whatsoever. He mentioned that he has seen 2 swans and a pair of ducks on the pond, which is very encouraging. He said that he has never noticed wildlife on this pond before.

Mr Weeks said that it would be important to keep an eye on the swans as they need quite a long run in order to get up and out of the pond area.

Mr Jefferson said that he has seen swans here before, so they are obviously able to get out of the pond fence boundaries.

Mr Demauge mentioned that the vegetation in the pond is working well.

Mr Payne said that he has agreed with SOS Cary that he will report back during the

various phases, so just needs to find the best way of doing this.

## **6 Date of next meeting**

**Date: Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> November.**

**Time: 18:30pm.**

**Venue: Crown Pet Foods.**

Mr Weeks sent his apologies already for this meeting.

The meeting closed at 19:38pm.