

**FFOS-Y-FRAN LIAISON COMMITTEE
MEETING
26 JULY 2007**

**MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICE, MERTHYR TYDFIL**

ATTENDEES:

Cllr. Ray Thomas	MTCBC Councillor Dowlais Electoral Division (ED) - Chairman
Cllr. Ian W. Clark	MTCBC Councillor Town (ED) Deputy Chairman
Cllr. Derek D Games	MTCBC Councillor Plymouth (ED)
Cllr. Helen Thomas	MTCBC Bedlinog (ED)
Cllr. Phil Williams	Dowlais Electoral Division (ED)
Mrs Alyson Austin	Bradley Gardens Resident
Mrs Jane Flower	Japonica Drive Resident
Mr W. Lyn Humphries	Dowlais Resident
Mr Alan Rees	Merthyr Resident
Mr Ron Yandle	Mountain Hare Resident
Mr David Williams	Environment Agency Wales
Mr David Griffiths	Environment Agency Wales
Mr David Dier	MTCBC Environmental Health
Ms Zoe Pieris	MTCBC Environmental Health
Mr James T. Poyner	Miller Argent (South Wales) Limited
Mr Stephen Tillman	Miller Argent (South Wales) Limited
Mr Robert Jones	Miller Argent (South Wales) Limited
Mr Bob Edwards	Miller Argent (South Wales) Limited
Mr David Mason	Miller Argent (South Wales) Limited
Dr Claire Holman	Peter Brett Associates

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Chairman confirmed that a quorum existed.
- 1.2. The Chairman thanked Miller Argent for the presentation of the Scheme held in Dowlais immediately before this meeting.

2. Attendance

- 2.1. Attendees were asked to sign the attendance register.

3. Apologies

- 3.1. Apologies were received from the following:- Cllr. Mark Elliott and Mr Norman Davies

4. Confirm The Notes Of The Previous Meeting.

- 4.1. The Chairman asked if anyone had any comments relating to the notes of the previous meeting.
- 4.2. The notes were accepted.

5. Matters Arising From The Notes Of The Previous Meeting

- 5.1. Mr Alan Rees stated that he was concerned from a security point of view about machines being left overnight at the side of the Bogey Road. Mr Jones explained that these belonged to the contractor doing the road improvement and site entrance works and that a security officer was on duty.
- 5.2. Mr R. Jones reported that the only security incidents that had occurred to date was some vandalism to the site fencing.
- 5.3. Mr Rees also asked whether the recent spell of exceptionally heavy rain had affected the culverts along the A4060 trunk road. Mr Jones replied that to the best of his knowledge it had not.
- 5.4. Mr Bob Edwards reported that rain had been recorded at the Cwmbargoed weather station on 41 days out of the past 45 days.
- 5.5. Mr Rees commented on the use of C.A. Blackwell as a subcontractor advising that they were known to him and he held them in high regard.

6. Résumé of Site Report

- 6.1. Mr Rob Jones talked through his written site progress report which had previously been distributed to all committee members.
- 6.2. Cllr. H. Thomas asked when coaling operation was to begin.
- 6.3. Mr Rob Jones replied explaining that it was weather dependant but hopefully late September early October this year.
- 6.4. Mrs A. Austin reported that the wind instrument at Twynyrodyn School was not operational.
- 6.5. Mr Bob Edwards replied that it was and that it has been in full operation since it was installed. Clearly there was some misunderstanding somewhere along the chain and Mr Edwards offered assistance to clarify any issues.

7. Recruitment

- 7.1. Mr Rob Jones explained that the recruitment process had begun and that he and his team would be carrying out interviews and job assessments during the following few weeks and beyond.

8. Discussion on Air Quality

- 8.1. Ms Zoe Pieris gave an explanation of air quality issues in general and of monitoring regimes.
- 8.2. A committee member referred to the recent report (June 2007) issued by the Welsh Health Impact Support Unit headed "A Report of A Health Impact Assessment Study Of an Opencast Scheme At Ffos-y-fran Merthyr Tydfil" and asked Ms Pieris if MTCBC had yet supplied the information requested under the Freedom of Information Act.
- 8.3. Ms Pieris and Mr Dier explained that as far as they were aware all available information had been provided but they also drew attention to the fact the report revisited issues that had been addressed at the Public Inquiry and did not represent a balanced view.
- 8.4. Miller Argent was asked to comment on the "Health Impact Assessment".
- 8.5. Mr James Poyner responded saying that Miller Argent was very disappointed that the Welsh Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (WHIASU) has allowed its name to be associated with this document as in their view it does them no credit at all.
- 8.6. Notwithstanding, and despite its title, the document is not (by the author's own admission) a health Impact Assessment (HIA).
- 8.7. Mr Poyner said that the document is in fact no more than a biased report organised and stage-managed by a group of known objectors to the Ffos-y-fran Land Reclamation Scheme (the Scheme). The quoted members of the "Steering Group", whom, it is stated in the report, are the ones who are to consider and assess evidence collected, are not professional people let alone experts in any of the associated fields the subject of the report. It is interesting and quite amazing that at no stage did anyone interview or consult with Miller Argent.
- 8.8. The Chairman stopped further discussion on the subject saying that it was not for the Liaison Committee to debate the merits of the report making the point that the issues had been debated and tested at the Public Inquiry that was held.
- 8.9. Ms Pieris explained that air quality standards were based on a 24 hour mean and annual mean and went on to explain Particle Matter (PM) levels.
- 8.10. Cllr. Ian Clark asked Ms Pieris if any PM levels had been exceeded.
- 8.11. Ms Pieris replied that 2 had been recorded so far but that neither of them were attributable to any activity at Ffos-y-fran as the works had not commence at the time of the exceedences.
- 8.12. Cllr. P. Williams asked if MTCBC were going to appoint an officer specifically to attend to issues relating to Ffos-y-fran and if so could it be funded? The question is to be raised again at a future meeting.
- 8.13. Mr Ron Yandle asked if the Government's datum required taking into account the health of people within the area being monitored.
- 8.14. Dr Claire Holman explained the Government's policy on PM₁₀s and confirmed that generically they do take account of sensitive groups.

- 8.15. Mr Yandle asked if the 500 metre distance between the site and the TEOM meter was too great. Dr Holman said no, explaining that PM₁₀ particles travel much greater distances than nuisance dust and that often just one TEOM will monitor air quality in an entire town.
- 8.16. Mr Yandle asked how the TEOM standard was set and Dr Holman explained the theory behind it. Mr Yandle asked if the residents of Mount View could rent their own TEOM Meter. Dr Holman replied that yes they could – anyone could but it would be important that the results be interpreted by an expert and that the TEOM is properly serviced and maintained.
- 8.17. Mr Yandle questioned the position of the Dustscan monitor at Mount View as it was partially screened by trees/shrubs. Mr Poyner said that he had made the same observation to a colleague the day previous. The Council would look to cut the trees back and Miller Argent undertook to review the positioning of the monitor within the compound.
- 8.18. There being no other questions on air quality the Chairman thanked both Ms Pieris and Dr Holman for their contribution to the discussion.

9. Complaints Received

- 9.1. Mr Jones confirmed that no complaints had been received in the period.

10. Any Other Business

- 10.1. In response to a query by Mrs Austin, Mr David Williams explained that the Environment Agency would be making regular visits to the site and would be particularly monitoring the discharge of water from the site.
- 10.2. Mr Yandle asked on behalf of the residents of Mount View how many properties would Miller Argent have structural surveys carried out. Mr Poyner advised that Miller Argent were taking advice from experts on what was required.
- 10.3. Mrs Austin stated that in view of climate change how can coal extraction be viewed as being environmentally friendly.
- 10.4. Mr Poyner suggested that it is not the extraction of coal that is the issue it is the way that coal is burnt that can generate the environmental issues. Mr Poyner explained that the plant and equipment purchased by Miller Argent were to the latest and highest standards particularly in terms of emissions.
- 10.5. Mrs Austin rephrased her question and asked how the burning of coal can be said to be environmentally friendly.
- 10.6. Mr Poyner said that this was an involved subject but in simple terms Aberthaw Power Station generates 40% of the electricity required in South Wales. The Station was specifically designed and built to burn Welsh Coal. The station was going through an extensive £220 million upgrade and was fitting Flue Gas Desulphurisation in order to comply with new European legislation that comes into effect next year. This will improve emission levels and assist in making the station more efficient in that it will burn less coal to produce the same amount of electricity. It also makes absolute common sense that coal that travels 40 miles

will have less effect on the carbon footprint to coal that travels several thousand miles.

10.7. The Chairman cut the topic short saying that important as the subject may be it was outside the remit of the liaison committee.

11. Agree The Date Of The Next Meeting

11.1. It was agreed not to hold a meeting during the month of August due to many people taking their annual holiday in that period. The date of the next meeting was therefore agreed to be Thursday 27th September 2007 commencing at 7.15pm.

11.2. There being no other business, Cllr Ray Thomas thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at approximately 8.30pm.

Signed as a correct record: Chairman Date