



Notes from Public Meeting

7th November 2022

Ropetackle Arts Centre, Shoreham

Attendees

Katy Taylor – Chief Customer Officer
Tony Knott – Senior Project Manager
Catherine Marriot – Regional Operations Manager
Martha Spooner – Customer County Manager
Denise Sandy – Customer Case Lead
Hannah Whickman – Press and Media officer
Nicole Brown – Capital Projects Customer Manager
Alex Willumsen – Community Partnerships Manager
Perry Yendell – MTS tankers

Approximately 55 people in attendance, including 3 Councillors and media.

Project Update

Tony Knott, Senior Project Manager, gave an update on the project. He explained the problems we have encountered since the last public meeting which mean we are still on site. We had hoped the lining work would be finished by now.

In particular, the recent high winds mean we can't work safely on the platforms and the tides mean we can't line and cure the pipe on the same day. Each section of lining is now taking two days, rather than the one we planned for.

Tony gave details from this week's newsletter (7/11/22) [Lancing sewer pipe lining works \(southernwater.co.uk\)](https://www.southernwater.co.uk) which explains the current situation. There is an issue we need to resolve before we can carry on along the Hasler line (down the alley from Pit 5 to the pumping station.)

We are waiting for a survey report. We've been told it will take 3 weeks, but we are working hard to resolve this.

In total, there are about 3 more weeks of lining work to carry out before we can reconnect the system and stop using tankers. There is the part from pit 5 to the pumping station and the part from pit 12 (in the field) to Wencelling pumping station.

Our current program of work (3 weeks for the report and 3 weeks of lining work) means we are aiming to have both sewers lined and in use by Christmas. All the tankers and traffic management would be gone as well. This is assuming everything goes to plan. We'll keep you updated if anything changes through the newsletters and website.

Removal of wastewater charges and legacy commitment from Southern Water

Katy Taylor, Chief Customer Officer, said she understood it's had been really hard for residents, not just those affected by the construction works, but those affected by tankers on the Brighton Road.

In recognition of this we will:

- Remove 100% of this year's annual wastewater charges for those directly affected by tankers and construction works from their bill.
- 50% of wastewater charges removed for those on the subsidiary roads affected.
- Letters will be sent out before Christmas to explaining the process. Customers do not have to do anything.
- Surface water drains will be jetted clean.
- Offer £30,000 (thirty thousand pounds) donation to a charity or community project once the work is completed.

We have already committed to replace any broken road slabs, pavements and dropped kerbs that we have caused damage to.

Katy explained that it had been her aspiration to offer a full and complete repair of the whole road. However, it was not going to be possible as the concrete alone is over a million pounds and our regulator won't allow us to do that. In addition, it would take over 18 months causing further disruption to residents. There would also be legal issues around liability in the long term.

A number of residents explained they would rather we repaired the road in full than gave the community a donation. We recognise that not everyone has had a chance to express their views on this so we will continue to explore this proposal, as well the feedback regarding the road.

Your questions answered

1. [If you have promised to replace parts of the road that you have damaged, can you carry out an independent survey to determine which parts that should be?](#)

We undertook a condition survey of the road before we started the planned construction work. We recorded videos and took photos. We also use google street maps, an independent record.

Our land surveyors are formalising all this data into a report. We will use this to make our assessment.

2. [Will you fix the two surface water drains on Orient road and one on George V that Southern Water cut years ago? One resident also requested that Southern Water liaise with WSCC in order to complete the storm drains that come to a rather abrupt end at the bottom of George V and Bristol Ave to improve the tidal and rainwater drainage.](#)

We will investigate this and come back to you.

3. Did Southern Water do a survey before we started?

Yes, we carried out a walking condition survey using video and photos on West Way and Orient Road.

4. Who's paying for the £30,000 community donation? Investors or customers?

We have two sources of money, our investors (Macquarrie) and customer bills. Everything we do, we pay for from those two pots of money. They aren't allocated to specific things.

We haven't paid any investors since 2017. There are no profits that leave the business. All profits have been reinvested. We paid the £90million fine out of shareholders funds.

5. Do you check your mains to see if any other pipes in the area are going to burst?

Yes, we have a manual maintenance and digital maintenance programme but it's an incredibly large network.

6. Is there capacity for the new houses in the area or will the extra flows cause more bursts?

We are not a statutory consultee in the planning process, but we can provide comments.

All developers have to check with us when they want to build new houses and we tell them if there is capacity or not. If there isn't enough then we have a legal duty to work with them to build a new connection or pipeline because everyone has the right to a wastewater system.

7. Residents raised on going issues with tankers.

It was acknowledged by several people that Perry from MTS has made a significant difference to noise issues by monitoring staff. One resident said, "it's been brilliant since the last meeting." However, others reported some contractors are still blocking driveways.

We have gone back to contractors every time an issue has been raised and for most people it seems to have resolved the situation.

We understand from the feedback at the meeting people's experience is inconsistent, and that's unacceptable.

So we'll take that away and work with our supply chain to improve things.

8. When will it all be done?

There is about 3 more weeks of relining/connections work which we can carry out as soon as we have the survey report, which is due in three weeks. We're aiming to have the sewers back in action before Christmas, all going to plan!

After Christmas, we'll fill in the pits – this is known as reinstatement.

Then, we'll carry out the road, pavement and kerb repairs. We can't give you a date for this as it depends when everything else is finished as we only want to do it once.

9. Are there any guarantees the relining will work?

Yes. It's designed for 60 years. This liner is resistant to attacks from saline and sewerage.

10. Why do we need traffic lights on the Brighton Road?

This is where we need the bigger tankers (with a trailer and cab). We need the lights to keep everyone safe and allow the large vehicles to pull in and out safely.

11. Can you move the compound?

We were trying to move it but it's not proved possible. There isn't another place to move it to. We're on site every week and we do talk to contractors about keeping it tidy. We're looking to make it smaller so that it is easier and safer to get round.

12. How much has bad weather affected things?

It has impacted progress significantly, especially last 4-5 days.

13. Do water companies talk to each other?

Yes, we share knowledge and ideas.

14. Why can't you fill in the pits if you have put the liner in?

We can't fill in the pits until the new pipe has been tested in case there is a burst or a leak, then we'd have to dig it all out again.

15. I heard that you could run a pipe down alley from pit 5 to the pumping station so we could stop the tankers for a while.

We don't want to take tankers away and then have to bring them back to put the pipe under the ground at a later date, so we won't be doing that.

16. The road flooding is worse than normal at this time of year – is that the pits?

Yes, some is overspilling from the pits but it's the usual combination of heavy rain and particularly high tides causing the groundwater to rise up and spill over the road.

