

Amenity issues briefing – July 2024

Introduction

The Environment Agency and Warwick District Council (WDC) have been working in partnership to investigate reports of flies and odour in the Heathcote and Whitnash area.

A number of these reports have named Plasgran Limited (also known as Berry Circular Polymers) as the source.

WDC - latest update

There has been a lot of activity during July, with new reports and complaints as well as additional activity from other organisations.

Statutory Nuisance – Environmental Protection Act 1990

Warwick District Council continues to engage with residents and has responded to calls and visited affected sites and residents' homes to assess whether the odours reported were likely to cause a statutory nuisance. WDC also provided feedback to the Environment Agency for ongoing permit compliance monitoring, as issues identified were found to be below the threshold to trigger any statutory action by the Council.

WDC visits

15 - including Tachbrook Road, Montgomery Road and Poseidon Way, close to Plasgran Limited.

Flies

16 reports of flies

Odours

92 reports of odours. The description of odours reported are listed below:

- bin, damp/stale/rotten egg
- drains/sewage
- chemical/plastic

Noise

4 mechanical related complaints. Noise from another site has been identified as a source and officers are currently monitoring the situation.

Seagulls

Several noise complaints have been received about noisy seagulls in the area. Seagulls' nests are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and actions to control these birds are licensed by Natural England and must be for reasons of protecting public health and safety. There is no evidence that seagulls are being attracted by the waste facility site as there isn't an available food source.

Severn Trent update

Severn Trent Water attended Tachbrook Road and investigated the sewage odour and possible drainage issue observed by residents and WDC Officers at the end of June. They reported that no issues were identified at the time but will be carrying out a more detailed mainline CCTV survey to further investigate the lines serving one or more properties in this area and we await the results of that survey.

Incident reporting

Warwick District Council is reviewing its working arrangements with the Environment Agency and how complaints are processed, this will be published on our website in due course.

Meanwhile, we are continuing to work with residents to support and investigate their reports and complaints, within the following reporting process guidance:

Report to WDC if the odour or noise, or you have excess numbers of flies inside your home – and it is **happening now and impacting you at home**, and it is during working hours. This enables offices to visit and witness it.

Please do not report issues to WDC, if it's not happening, or if is outside normal office working hours, as we are unable to carry out a reactive visit to your home.

Instead use a nuisance diary and note the time of day, duration and wind direction and return your log to the Council every few weeks.

The log will be reviewed and compared with the logs from other residents, taking into consideration where residents live, wind direction, duration and time of occurrence. If a pattern can be established, this will be considered further with the Environment Agency.

Please do not report issues to WDC, if it's not happening or not impacting you at home or work.

Report to WDC if there are odour, pests or noise issues coming from another facility/location (for example not from Plasgran Limited).

Warwick District Council will soon be publishing a dedicated area on its website, which will host a number of FAQs, for residents to check whether there is already an answer to a question.

What can residents do to help?

Do keep a diary log of events, to see if this helps to identify any patterns of when issues are at their worst. Keep this for 2 weeks before returning them, officers will then compare your diary with those received from other residents. If a pattern is identified this information can be shared with the Environment Agency. A copy of a diary log can be found here [Nuisance diary - Download - Warwick District Council. \(warwickdc.gov.uk\)](#)

Do refer to our FAQs to check whether there is already an answer to your question. These will be published on the Council webpage soon and will include updated methods of contact.

Environment Agency - latest update

Although fly numbers can fluctuate, the most recent data shows that numbers recorded at Plasgran Limited (PL) are decreasing following the implementation of additional measures requested by the Environment Agency.

The Environment Agency conducted an unannounced site inspection of PL on 18 June 2024. Our findings – PL has completed an outstanding action to revise its odour management plan. We gave PL an action to ensure procedures detailed within its management plans are followed and errors that may prevent this are reviewed appropriately.

We also conducted an announced site inspection of PL on 25 July 2024. The permit holder has 28 days from the receipt of our Compliance Assessment Report (CAR), in which it can challenge any findings within the report. As this information falls within the 28-day challenge period, we will include it in next month's briefing note.

Environment Agency officers have been unable to substantiate a link between amenity issues in Leamington Spa and any particular site.

Reports received

Between 1 July 2024 and 31 July 2024, the Environment Agency received:

- 34 reports of odour
- 8 reports of flies
- 4 complaints of noise
- 3 complaints of noise from seagull activity

Flies

The Environment Agency contacted a number of residents that have recently reported being impacted by flies, to consent to fly monitoring being carried out within their homes. The purpose of the monitoring is to help us gather data on the species and fly activity in the local area. To date, one of these residents has given consent. We began this residential fly monitoring on 29 July 2024. We are unable to offer fly monitoring to every local resident due to the cost and resource implications. However, if you are still being impacted by flies and would consent to us conducting fly monitoring within your home, please contact our enquiries team on enquiries_westmids@environment-agency.gov.uk. This will allow us to consider if we are able to pursue fly monitoring in your home.

Fly activity will fluctuate depending on weather conditions.

Odour

We have continued to investigate all odour complaints we have received throughout July and have completed odour monitoring in the area at multiple locations. Although we have detected intermittent odours in the residential area this month, we have either not detected the odour on subsequent visits to the named site, or not substantiated levels of odour likely to cause pollution outside the site. We will continue to investigate the odour reports we receive.

In our June briefing we detailed an increase in reports of a sewage and human excrement odour in the area, which was reported to Seven Trent to investigate. Please refer to the update provided by WDC earlier in the briefing for these findings.

When carrying out odour monitoring in the area on 29 July, we witnessed contractors employed by the landowner of the industrial estate carrying out drainage works. They informed us that there was a fault with the pumping station on the industrial estate and multiple blockages have been identified. Full drain maintenance is being carried out across the industrial estate by the contractor to rectify any potential blockages. We will keep you updated on this situation when we know more.

Noise

We have received complaints of noise caused by a sounder door at night and in the early hours of the morning. The reports have named PL as being the cause of the noise. PL receive and transfer waste between the hours of 7AM and 7PM. PL have confirmed that they do not have an alarm on any external doors.

We have received information identifying another potential source of the noise, namely a different business in the immediate area. The report information has been passed to WDC to investigate.

We have also recently received 3 reports of noise caused by seagulls between 4am and 5am in the morning. We understand how the noise caused by seagulls can be frustrating for residents, especially when sleep is disrupted. Although seagulls have been noted in the area, they are not attributed to a specific source. WDC have provided further information on seagulls in its update above.

We will continue to regulate permitted and exempt sites in the area, to ensure operators are taking appropriate measures to control odour and flies.

Incident reporting

You can report any fly issues, odour, or noise linked to Environment Agency permitted sites to the 24-hour Environment Agency incident hotline on **0800 80 70 60**.

We encourage you to report any issues as soon as practically possible. Please provide as much detail as possible for example, the approximate number of flies that are impacting you and any photographs.

Other sources of information

You can find more information about the action taken to date by the Environment Agency and WDC here: <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/west-midlands/leamington-spa-fly-issues/>

Paper copies of the updates are available to view in the following local buildings. Please do not remove these paper copies.

- Whitnash Civic Centre, Acre Close, Whitnash
- Heathcote Community Centre, Cressida Close, Heathcote
- Brunswick Hub, Shrubland Street, Leamington Spa
- The Sydni Centre, Cottage Square, Sydenham.