

Walleys Quarry Landfill Site

30 September 2021

We have developed this weekly update to help keep the community of Newcastle under Lyme, and wider area, up-to-date with developments around our regulation of Walleys Quarry landfill.

Walleys Quarry Ltd are responsible for the hydrogen sulphide escaping from their site. As regulator we are committed to making sure the operator tackles the problems at Walleys Quarry, to improve things for everyone, as quickly as possible. Our team of regulators continues to put pressure on the operator to take the necessary measures to resolve the hydrogen sulphide issues.

News in brief

- **Face to face engagement sessions**

See [Staffordshire County Council's website](#) for full details of the face to face events.

The events are being held at Bradwell Lodge Community Centre, Bradwell Lane, Newcastle-under-Lyme, ST5 8PS, on:

- Tuesday, 5th October, from 4pm to 8.30pm;
- Tuesday 12th October, from 2pm to 7pm.

There will be no fixed presentation or speeches, and people can 'drop-in' at any time during the event and talk directly to representatives of the councils and agencies at different tables.

There have been comments on social media about the choice of location. Other venues closer to the site, with the facilities needed (large space for people to walk around, accessible for people with disabilities, toilets, etc) and with appropriate ventilation to help reduce the risk of spreading COVID, were not available for these events.

Multi-agency partners very much hope to see as many local people as possible over the two events.

- **Judicial Review and our regulation**

We've seen comments on social media from people believing the outcome of the judicial review meant that the landfill would be closed.

That is not the case.

There has been no change in legislation and the judgment does not add to our enforcement powers, nor does it require the Environment Agency to close the site. The Court did not find the Environment Agency in present breach of its legal obligations, but we are taking the judgment from Mr Justice Fordham seriously, and are committed to tackling the problems at Walleys Quarry, to improve things for everyone, as quickly as possible.

We recognise the community want us to suspend the permit or close the site. However, we do not have grounds to suspend the permit and stop new waste coming onto the site.

We can only suspend activities where they involve risks of pollution. At Walleys Quarry the hydrogen sulphide escaping the site is coming from waste already in the landfill that is now decomposing, not from new deposits. This means that suspending current operations (or revoke the permit) would not address the issues.

Importing new waste has a part to play in controlling landfill gas from decomposing waste. We have instructed Walleys Quarry Ltd to stop hydrogen sulphide escaping from existing waste and to take appropriate steps to manage new waste, including:

- Making sure Walleys Quarry Ltd follows procedures to check the documentation that accompanies each load before it is tipped at the site.
 - Obtaining details of all waste loads rejected at the site this year because they contained gypsum-waste.
 - Increasing our audits of the waste supply chain of waste arriving at the site; we track back to find where waste originated and what it contains. This is important to ensure only waste authorised by the permit is accepted at the site.
 - Making sure Walleys Quarry Ltd increase the number of gas wells across the landfill to make sure infrastructure is in place for the future.
 - Working to improve the gas utilisation processes, so future landfill gas will be safely destroyed.
- **Drilling gas wells and posi-shell capping – an update**
Walleys Quarry Ltd, are currently delivering two of the vital actions we've instructed them to take to further reduce landfill gas escaping from the site:

Drilling new gas wells

Walleys Quarry Ltd have said work on drilling the gas wells is progressing as planned, and will see 28 new gas wells completed and operational by the end of October.

In our experience, this engineering work can see a small temporary increase in landfill gas being released. We're monitoring these works closely.

This is vital work to increase the amount of landfill gas going into the gas utilisation plant to be safely destroyed and, once complete and connected, will further reduce the landfill gas escaping from the site.

At the end of each day all wells must be capped or connected to the gas management pipework so that nothing is left open. This is set out in the agreed installation plan for this work.

Capping of the steep flanks of the site with 'posi'shell'

Walleys Quarry Ltd have chosen to use a substance called 'posi-shell' to cap this area, and are posting regular updates on their [website](#) and on social media.

The posi-shell materials are covering the flanks as expected and is being applied by independent certified experts.

Once this work is complete, we will assess its success by analysing data from a 'surface emissions survey', which will show how much hydrogen sulphide is contained after capping. This work also needs to be independently assessed and validated.

We have instructed Walleys Quarry Ltd to take a significant amount of action to control the landfill gas escaping from their site. However, we know that some weeks we're

seeing lower levels of hydrogen sulphide escaping from the site, and while that is good news, we know the problem remains and we will continue to use our regulatory powers to require Walleys Quarry Ltd to bring hydrogen sulphide emissions under control.

- **Latest hydrogen sulphide levels**

For the week 20 to 26 September, hydrogen sulphide levels were below the World Health Organisation's (WHO) 24-hour average health guideline level to protect against short-term health effects but were above the WHO 30-minute average odour annoyance guideline level between 2% and 11% of the week. During this week we received 797 reports from local people.

- MMF1 - Silverdale Cemetery = 3%
- MMF2 - Silverdale Road = 2%
- MMF6 - Newcastle-under-Lyme Fire Station = 6%
- MMF9 - Galingale View = 11%

These higher levels this week are not unexpected, in our experience, engineering work to drill new gas wells can see a small temporary increase in landfill gas being released.

We're committed to providing regular reports about the data collected from our mobile monitoring facilities located around Walleys Quarry. For the Environment Agency's monitoring report and data set for August, and more information about our reports, see section 5 of these webpages.

We are updating the information on this webpage every week. To receive notifications, email your contact details to: Engagement_WestMids@environment-agency.gov.uk and we will add you to our mailing list.

See [Staffordshire County Council website](#) for information on public health impacts of odours in the Silverdale and wider Newcastle under Lyme area.

Walleys Quarry website: <https://walleysquarry.co.uk/>