

# Walleys Quarry Landfill Site

6 May 2021

We are sorry that the community are continuing to live with the distress that odour causes and we are challenging Walleys Quarry Ltd (formerly Red Industries RM Ltd) every step of the way to account for the odour levels and the impact these are having, and to successfully manage odour from their operations.

## LATEST INFORMATION

- Red Industries RM Ltd have chosen to change their name to Walleys Quarry Ltd. Please be assured, this does not affect our regulation of the site, the permit they hold with us and any enforcement actions we issue to the company.
- Our initial visual assessments of the capping work appear to show the company has completed the works required on site by the deadline. However, before we can formally confirm that the conditions of the Enforcement Notice have been fully met, we require the company to get verification of their work through an independent Construction Quality Assurance assessment so we have assurance that the works have been completed in accordance with the approved construction plan.
- For the week 26 April to 2 May, hydrogen sulphide levels were well below the WHO guideline level for impact on health, but were above the annoyance guideline level for between 4% and 35% of the week.
- This week officers have completed 6 visits to the site and wider area. In these visits we monitored the odour levels, in varying locations and at different times of the day, and assessed the progress the operator is making on the works we've required them to carry out.
- We really appreciate everyone reporting odour to us and would request you continue to use the email account to do this [ics@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:ics@environment-agency.gov.uk) or click the 'contact us' link on this webpage. If you do call our incident line, we will be taking steps to make this more efficient for you and to gather the key information. This should reduce the time taken for you to report to us. You will still receive an incident number from us.
- See [Staffordshire County Council website](#) for the latest on public health impacts of odours in the Silverdale and wider Newcastle under Lyme area.
- We are updating the information on this webpage every week. To receive notifications when these updates happen email your contact details to: [Engagement\\_WestMids@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Engagement_WestMids@environment-agency.gov.uk) and we will add you to our mailing list.

### **Red Industries name change.**

Red Industries RM Ltd have decided to change their business name for the site to Walleys Quarry Limited. This name change does not affect our regulation of the site or the contents of their permit. The name has changed, but their company number has stayed the same, so they are the same 'legal entity' and continue to be responsible for the operation of the site.

### **Walleys Quarry capping works**

Walleys Quarry Ltd (previously known as Red Industries RM Ltd) has made good progress in capping areas of the site we specified under our enforcement notice. Our initial visual assessments appear to show the company has completed the works required on site by the deadline.

However, before we can formally confirm that the conditions of the Enforcement Notice have been fully met, the permit requires that they verify their work through an independent Construction Quality Assurance assessment. We have asked the company to expedite this report. After this we will be able to give a formal position on whether the operator has met the enforcement notice.

Alongside this, we have required the company to employ specialist contractors to repeat a landfill gas emissions survey on the surface of the landfill. This survey will be completed by 7 May 2021 and the report submitted to us by 12 May 2021. This would ordinarily take several weeks. It allows us to understand how effective the capping has been and where gasses are still coming from. A similar survey was done before the capping so we will be able to tell the difference it has made.

### **Other compliance matters**

On 29 April, we received a surface emissions survey covering the whole site carried out in March. The following day we issued a Compliance Assessment Report (CAR) requiring the operator to submit its action plan to further reduce odours and emissions for areas on cells 3 and 4 where the survey identified that surface emissions were above the limit set within the relevant guidance. The action plan needs to be submitted to us by 12 May 2021.

On 27 April, we also issued a CAR form requiring the operator to bring a second gas collection engine into active use by 17 May.

### **Next Steps**

We are an evidence based organisation, our actions are determined by facts and evidence that would stand legal scrutiny. While the capping work should go some way to reducing the reducing odour off site, we have always said that further work will be needed for the operator to effectively manage odour from its operations.

Conversations about what this further work is have been happening in parallel with the capping work. Last week we instructed the operator to produce an action plan to:

- Use the results of the March surface emissions survey to form a plan by 12 May for capping of cells 3 and 4 to further reduce emissions and odours.
- Review the processes it uses to check the waste that is coming onto site (it's waste acceptance criteria), including additional checks we have recommended to reduce taking

waste materials involving gypsum which is known to produce hydrogen sulphide when it degrades.

- Continue its focus on improving its management of landfill gas from the site.

The Environment Agency actions now are focussed on:

- Reviewing the latest surface emissions survey and the independent quality assurance assessment from the Construction Quality Assurance engineer to assess the completeness and effectiveness of the capping under the enforcement notice.
- Determine what further work is necessary to reduce odour from other parts of the site, so we can assess whether the operator's plan is appropriate or whether we need to take action to instruct it to do more. This could include further capping work.
- Continuing to review the air quality monitoring data and working with partners, specifically those with responsibilities for health, to understand the impact on the community.
- Visiting site, both announced and unannounced to check compliance and carry out amenity checks of the surrounding area.
- Using all of this information, along with the complaints we receive, as evidence to determine appropriate next steps to tackle the odour.

### **Waste acceptance**

Walley's Quarry Limited has, currently, voluntarily suspended taking on of new waste material. Because this is voluntary, it is up to the company to decide when it will begin to take materials on site again. Our understanding is that it plans to do this from the week beginning 10 May.

We have told the operator that we expect it to review the processes it uses to check the waste that is coming onto site so we, and it, have increased assurance that materials such as gypsum are not being accepted. We are increasing our inspections of this activity.

### **Air Quality in the last week**

We are committed to sharing with you the outcome of our monthly monitoring. However, we realise local people want to see more frequent information about recorded hydrogen sulphide levels compared to the World Health Organisation's 24-hour health-based guidance level. We will seek to bring you this information every week in this update.

We are also able to share with you hydrogen sulphide levels compared to the World Health Organisation's annoyance guidance level, which WHO says above which there is likely to be complaints about odour annoyance.

Please note that this weekly data is based on raw data that has not yet been subjected to quality assurance checking or calibration. As a result this data may change once the quality assurance check and calibration has been carried out.

For the week 26 April to 2 May, hydrogen sulphide levels were well below the WHO guideline level for impact on health, but were above the annoyance guideline level for between 4% and 35% of the week.

Data from our monitoring stations for the percentage of the week odours were above annoyance thresholds:

Silverdale Road 10%  
Galingale View 35%

Silverdale Cemetery 4%  
Newcastle-under-Lyme Community Fire Station 13%

This is consistent with complaints received.

### **Air quality monitoring data**

The Air Quality Monitoring Report for March was release last Thursday and you can download a copy on our Citizen Space website - <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/west-midlands/walleys-quarry-landfill-sliverdale/>.

The data was collected from air quality monitoring units placed around the Walleys Quarry site, which was collated and independently validated.

The Environment Agency uses the air quality data in its work to regulate the site. If you are looking for information about monitors used in people's homes/businesses, you need to contact Newcastle Under Lyme District Council.

### **Groundwater and leaking pipe samples**

We have worked with the Coal Authority, Severn Trent Water and Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council to investigate the claims made by Walley's Quarry Limited in their statement of 25 March.

The Coal Authority has reviewed its information and confirmed to the Environment Agency that the hydrogen sulphide odour is not associated with coal mining. There is no evidence to substantiate the claims made by the operator that hydrogen sulphide odour is coming from another source.

The operator have not shared their assessments with us or other partners. The responsibility to prove that hydrogen sulphide is not coming from their landfill operations now lies with Walley's Quarry Limited themselves.

### **Email**

Unfortunately our National Incident Hotline email service experienced some technical issues and went down over the bank holiday weekend. We are sorry for the inconvenience. The email system has been fixed and is now working. Many residents emailed us about complaints on the correspondence email addresses and we would like to assure you that these have been passed to our incident service for logging.

### **Site visits**

We usually visit the site once a week and carry out amenity check of the surrounding area, the other days, last week we visited the area 6 times in total. This doesn't include the meetings we hold with the company remotely.

### **Number of complaints**

The number of reports of odour in the Newcastle under Lyme area for week from 26 April to 2 May is 1428.

## Multi-agency roles and responsibilities

- The Environment Agency regulates the two environmental permits held by the operator for the landfill. The permit covers on-site activities with the aim of minimising the impact on the local environment in terms of air quality, noise, odour, dust, leachate and impacts to groundwater. We enforce that permit through monitoring and undertaking site visits (both announced and unannounced) and where needed we take enforcement action to address compliance issues.
- Staffordshire County Council is responsible for determining planning permission across the area. The Environment Agency comments on planning applications. The Council also has responsibilities for traffic movement. This is part of planning permission for the site and is not included in the Environment Agency permit conditions.
- Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council is responsible for regularly monitoring air quality across the area, to ensure that it does not impact human health.
- Public Health England is an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care, and a distinct organisation with operational autonomy. They provide government, local government, the NHS, Parliament, industry and the public with evidence-based professional, scientific expertise and support. They have no statutory powers in relation to odorous sites and therefore work with multi-agency partners to ensure public health is protected.

Where possible, we ask residents to report odours in the local area surrounding Walleys Quarry via email. To report an odour issue related to Walleys Quarry, please [Click Here](#). This will open a template email for you to complete and send to our Incident Communications Service (ICS).

Our incident hotline is primarily there to help people report new things about which we do not know and are not yet acting on. The volume of calls we are receiving on this issue is leading to a very real risk that we will miss a call on a different, new and urgent issue. We understand the odour issues that are being experienced at Walleys Quarry and that the ability to report them to us is important. We are taking this very seriously and reporting via email will ensure that we continue to capture and log all submitted odour reports.