

Walleys Quarry weekly update – 10 March 2022

The Environment Agency has prepared this weekly update to help the community of Newcastle-under-Lyme and the wider area keep informed about developments concerning its regulation of Walleys Quarry Landfill.

Walleys Quarry Ltd is the operator of the landfill site and it alone is responsible for the hydrogen sulphide emissions escaping from the site.

The Environment Agency is the environmental regulator. We require Walleys Quarry Ltd to meet its environmental obligations and resolve the ongoing odour issues at the landfill as quickly as possible.

News in brief – 10 March 2022

Hydrogen sulphide levels in January – an update

Following more than 100 odour reports from the community within a 24-hour period, Environment Agency officers inspected Walleys Quarry landfill site on 14 January 2022. Officers detected an odour of landfill gas at a level likely to cause pollution outside the site boundary.

Officers also carried out a review of landfill gas management data. They identified that gas collection infrastructure was repeatedly blocked between 7 January and 13 January due to poor drainage and surface water flooding. This led to a significant loss of gas capture, which in turn was likely to have resulted in increased risk of gas emissions and nuisance odours. Walleys Quarry Ltd took action to address this issue, with remedial works connected to drainage completed by 20 January 2022.

Another factor which contributed to the temporary increase in H₂S levels was the weather. We have previously explained that meteorological conditions, particularly in winter, can cause increases in landfill gas emissions. We have carried out a review of the meteorological and H₂S data collected from all 4 air quality monitoring units over the period in January where H₂S levels increased. We found that increases in H₂S levels, correlate to lower air temperatures and pressure, along with still air conditions.

Approval of new capping and phasing plan

We have approved a capping and phasing plan from Walleys Quarry Ltd which outlines its intentions for filling and capping areas of the landfill. Key dates include the permanent capping of phase 1 by the end of March 2022, phase 2 by the end of April 2022, and phase 3 by the end of June 2022.

By carrying out this capping work, Walleys Quarry Ltd further implements our 'contain, capture and destroy' strategy. The containment of more landfill gas, which is diverted to the gas utilisation plant and flares for destruction, means less gas is available to escape. This leads to lower emissions to the local environment, which we anticipate will result in a reduced experience of malodour in the community.

Community Engagement

We're planning to be in the local area in the coming weeks to hold further doorstep conversations with residents. We want to hear more from you about the impact of the landfill on your daily lives. We will choose houses at random, as we did before. Our officers will carry identification and will never ask to come into your house, or ask for personal details. If we do come to your door and you would prefer not to speak to us, please just let us know.

Walleys Quarry permit consultation

The consultation on our draft decision to vary two environmental permitting conditions for Walleys Quarry Landfill ends in 11 days. Anyone wishing to comment on the proposals has until Monday 21 March.

Variations to environmental permits are not unusual during the operational lifespan of a landfill site and the specific variations within this permit are standard for such a regulated site. In most cases, permit variations are introduced to allow for the implementation of improved operational technologies and techniques, or to add additional conditions to improve regulation.

Applications of this kind do not require public consultation. However, given the level of interest from the neighbouring community, the Environment Agency has decided to carry out a consultation before it reaches its final decision. The consultation will allow local residents and interested groups to submit any new relevant information related to the proposed changes.

Further information, including details on how to take part in the consultation, is available online at <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/psc/st5-6dh-walleys-quarry-landfill-site-epr-dp3734dc/>.

The consultation documents can also be viewed in the following local libraries:

- Newcastle Library, Castle House, Barracks Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 1BL
- Knutton Library, Church Lane, Knutton, Newcastle, Staffordshire, ST5 6EB
- Silverdale Library, High Street, Silverdale, Newcastle-under-Lyme, ST5 6LY

Anyone wishing to comment on the proposals is invited to read the documentation online or at the local libraries detailed above before responding electronically on the website or by email to PSCpublicresponse@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Latest hydrogen sulphide levels

Our 'Ambient Air' monitoring team continues to check air quality around Walleys Quarry landfill. It does this through a network of mobile monitoring stations (MMFs) that are positioned in communities around the site. These check for levels of hydrogen sulphide and methane, which are indicators of potential odour pollution.

The chart below contains raw data collected from our ambient air mobile monitoring stations (MMFs) in the period 28 February – 6 March 2022.

Levels of hydrogen sulphide during this week remained below the World Health Organisation's 24-hour average health guideline level (150µg/m³ or 107ppb) to protect against short-term health effects.

Levels rose above the World Health Organisation's 30-minute average odour annoyance guideline level (7µg/m³ or 5ppb) at 2 locations during this week compared to levels during the previous week and fell at the other 2 locations.

| MMF ID & Location | % of time the monitoring location recorded H ₂ S above the | Change |
|-------------------|---|--------|
|-------------------|---|--------|

| WHO annoyance guideline level | | |
|---------------------------------|-----|--------------------|
| MMF1 Silverdale Cemetery | 2.4 | ▲ on previous week |
| MMF2 Silverdale PS | 0 | ▼ on previous week |
| MMF6 Fire Station | 0.3 | ▼ on previous week |
| MMF9 Galingale View | 15 | ▲ on previous week |

It is important to note that this is raw data and may change slightly as results are verified.

We do expect to see short term fluctuations in the concentrations of hydrogen sulphide leaving the site. The causes can include factors such as the temporary impact of improvement works being carried out on site and changes in the weather.

Odours associated with landfill gas emissions will increase during colder weather and still wind conditions. With less dispersion, the potential for causing odour nuisance is greater.

By contrast, in warmer weather the gases are naturally more diluted due to higher temperatures and rising air. This means improvements from measures implemented at Walleys Quarry Landfill to reduce odour could be less noticeable around this time of year. However, it is important to note that despite short term spikes, the overall trend in the levels of hydrogen sulphide concentrations in the ambient air continues to reduce.

Odour Reporting

In the week 28 February – 6 March 2022, the Environment Agency received a total of 602 reports about odour from the site to our national incident hotline. This is an increase in the number of reports compared to the previous week.

Landfill odour can be extremely distressing for those affected. We continue to consider whether further enforcement action is necessary should the operator fail to take steps to address this issue in an appropriate timescale.

You can report your experience of landfill odours to us via GOV.UK at: <https://report-walleys-quarry-smell.service.gov.uk/>

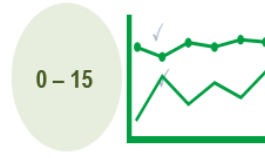
Using this online form is the easiest and quickest way for you to report odour from Walleys Quarry.

We encourage residents to use this method of reporting (rather than e-mail) as it means we are able to generate the reports we share with you more efficiently.

When completing the form, you will still receive a unique reference number each time you report an incident. You will still be able to make multiple odour reports. You can also still call us on 0800 80 70 60.



Number of odour reports/complaints to the Environment Agency
28 Feb – 6 March 2022



Hydrogen Sulphide 30 minute average odour annoyance: % of time above WHO guideline level
w/c 28 February 2022



Hydrogen Sulphide Level. 24 hour World Health Organisation guideline to protect against short term health effects

you can report landfill odours to the Environment Agency via GOV.UK at:

<https://report-walleys-quarry-smell.service.gov.uk/>

Air Quality

The UK Health Security Agency has published its Health Risk Assessment of air quality monitoring results for the period up to January 2022. The results can be viewed online at: [ukhsa-health-risk-assessment-air-quality-monitoring-report---january-2022.pdf](https://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/ukhsa-health-risk-assessment-air-quality-monitoring-report---january-2022.pdf) ([environment-agency.gov.uk](https://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/))

Correspondence update

We are not able to answer questions fully on social media, so if you have a question, you can email it to us at enquiries_westmids@environment-agency.gov.uk

Every month we endeavour to present a summary of the most frequently asked questions received by our correspondence team in the previous month, together with our responses to those questions. This complements a more detailed FAQ document that covers a wider range of queries from the local community about the site.

You can find the documents on this Citizen Space webpage here: <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/west-midlands/walleys-quarry-landfill-sliverdale/#section2>

If you have a question concerning our ongoing regulation of Walleys Quarry you can email us at enquiries_westmids@environment-agency.gov.uk

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

Other sources of information

UK Health Security Agency public health messages and advice about the effects of odours from Walleys Quarry landfill are available online via Staffordshire County Council's website: [Frequently asked questions about the health effects of odours and emissions from Walleys Quarry: - Staffordshire County Council](https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/health-effects-odours-walleys-quarry)

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