

Walleys Quarry Landfill Site

7 October 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 emissions 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 multi-agency engagement sessions**

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

Despite the terrible weather we were really pleased to see lots of you at the multi agency event on Tuesday. All organisations valued the opportunity to have face to face conversations, to be able to hear from you, the concerns and experiences you have had and for us to be able to explain what we are continuing to do in dealing with this situation.

Some key issues you raised with us included our powers to close the site (the answer to this question is below and has not changed) and when the hydrogen sulphide levels will improve following the judicial review. Walleys Quarry Ltd is responsible for the hydrogen sulphide emissions escaping from their site. As regulator we have been using our legal powers to require the operator to resolve the issue of unacceptable levels of those emissions escaping from the site since it began earlier this year. Our regulatory plan, that the Judge requested from us, is being finalised and will be shared with the legal representatives of the judicial review claimant before making it available for everyone.

If you didn't make it on Tuesday, there is another opportunity next week on Tuesday 12th October from 2-7pm at Bradwell Lodge Community Centre, Bradwell Lane, Newcastle-under-Lyme, ST5 8PS

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

- **Judicial Review and our regulation**

We included this information last week, however we realise from the questions on Tuesday that not everyone has seen this information yet, so we're including it again this week.

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.

- **Posi-shell capping nearly complete**

The posi-shell capping work of the steep flanks of the site is nearly complete. Posi-shell is a cement-based product, so can only be applied when the weather is dry. This has meant there have been some delays due to heavy rain last week. As the work is very close to being finished, we've granted a very short extension to the deadline and expect this work to be complete by the end of this week.

Walleys Quarry Ltd have chosen to use a substance called 'posi-shell' to cap this area, and have posted regular updates on their [website](#) and on social media. The materials were applied by independent certified experts.

We will now 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.

When complete, nearly 70% of the site is permanently or temporarily capped. To read more about why capping is important, see our update for the [23 September](#).

- **Drilling gas wells – an update**

Walleys Quarry Ltd are drilling a further 28 new gas wells. 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.

- **Latest hydrogen sulphide levels**

For the week from 27 September to 3 October, 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 less than 0.3% of the week. During this week we received 222 reports from local people.

- MMF1 - Silverdale Cemetery = 0%
- MMF2 - Silverdale Road = 0%
- MMF6 - Newcastle-under-Lyme Fire Station = 0%
- MMF9 - Galingale View = 0.3%

We have instructed Walleys Quarry Ltd to make substantial improvements to reduce hydrogen sulphide levels to those assessed to be safe by Public Health England. We are seeing lower levels of hydrogen sulphide escaping from the site, and whilst this is good news, we know the problem remains. You have our commitment on continuing to use our regulatory powers, as allowed by Government, to require Walleys Quarry Ltd to bring hydrogen sulphide emissions under control.

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/>