

Walleys Quarry Landfill Site

21 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

- **Meeting local action groups**

Following the virtual and face to face events, we're meeting two of the local Walleys Quarry action groups this week and hope to meet with the third very soon.

These meetings will hopefully give the groups representing the local community opportunity to have in-depth discussions about Walleys Quarry and the issues people experience.

We're also working with multi-agency partners to plan the next opportunities for local people to talk to all partners about Walleys Quarry.

- **Drilling gas wells – an update**

We've required Walleys Quarry Ltd to increase the number of gas wells on the site. This work is happening now.

We're receiving regular updates from Walleys Quarry Ltd about the current work and we've been onsite and seen the work for ourselves.

Walleys Quarry are on target to complete the work as required by the end of October. 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

See the [Walleys Quarry Ltd website](#) for regular updates.

- **An update from UK Health Security Agency**

The UKHSA August health risk assessment air quality monitoring report is available.

UKHSA said:

"This month's UKHSA risk assessment interpreted levels of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) (namely benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylene (BTEX), which have been included along with some additional charts and graphs which illustrate that hydrogen sulphide data up to the end

of August 2021 continues to show exposure to the population around the site, albeit concentrations in August continue to decrease compared to those seen from March to July 2021.

“Additionally, at three of the monitoring sites concentrations are now below the long-term (lifetime) health-based guidance value. Currently any risk to long-term (lifetime) physical health is likely to be small, however, we cannot completely exclude a risk to health from pollutants in the area, where exposure continues above the long-term health-based guidance values.”

- **Judicial review and our plan to reduce hydrogen sulphide emissions**

The Environment Agency is taking the judgment from Mr Justice Fordham seriously, and we are committed to tackling the problems at Walleys Quarry, to improve things for everyone, as quickly as possible.

Last week we published our plan to reduce hydrogen sulphide emissions at Walleys Quarry. This plan builds on this extensive regulatory action taken to date and outlines the latest measures we've designed and applied, which Walleys Quarry Ltd is required to implement in the coming months to further improve control of hydrogen sulphide emissions.

Walleys Quarry Ltd is responsible for the hydrogen sulphide emissions escaping from its site. This plan shows our continuing work to rigorously require the operator to resolve the issue of unacceptable levels of those emissions.

Read our [plan](#) and [press release](#).

We have applied for permission to appeal the Judgment in relation to the appropriate role of the Court when considering judicial review and remedies involving regulatory decisions. We cannot comment further on active litigation.

Our request to appeal does not change our determination to tackle the problems at this site in the interests of the Claimant, the community and the environment.

- **On closing the site**

Suspending the operator's permit would not prevent hydrogen sulphide escaping from the site.

The Environment Agency does not have grounds to suspend the permit and stop waste coming onto the site. This is because the hydrogen sulphide escaping the site is coming from waste already in the landfill that is now decomposing. The Environment Agency does not believe high levels of hydrogen sulphide off site are being caused by waste deposited since Walleys Quarry Ltd made changes to their waste acceptance procedures. A permit can only be suspended where the activity is the cause of the problem. Should fresh evidence indicate that there is a problem associated with current waste being deposited at the site, we will immediately review these measures once again.

- **Latest hydrogen sulphide levels**

For the week from 11 to 17 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 between 0% and 9% of the week. During this week we received 305 reports from local people.

- MMF1 - Silverdale Cemetery = 0%
- MMF2 - Silverdale Road = 0.5%
- MMF6 - Newcastle-under-Lyme Fire Station = 1.5%
- MMF9 - Galingale View = 9%

We have instructed Walleys Quarry Ltd to make substantial improvements to reduce hydrogen sulphide levels to those assessed to be safe by the UK Health Security Agency. 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/>