

Thornhaugh Liaison Committee Meeting

Minutes

Thursday 29 February 2024

Present

Alan Jones (**AJ**) via Teams
Greg Wilkinson (**GW**)
Hally Hardie(**HH**)
Gary Bower (**GB**)
Peter Oldfield (**PO**)
Lottie Ball (**LB**)
Eleanor Nicholson (**EN**)

Peterborough City Council
Environment Agency
Home Farm Residents
Augean
Augean
Augean
Jennings Nicholson for Augean

Introductions

PO welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from: Lindsey Freeman, Richard Clarke, Gavin Elsey

Augean Corporate Update

GB reminded the meeting that in March 2023 Augean had acquired Future Industrial Services (FIS). This has expanded the geographical spread of the company to 23 sites and increased its workforce to around 700 people. As a result there has been some considerable work for all internal company teams to ensure that the Future teams have been effectively assimilated into the Augean organisational structure. The FIS portfolio of sites are primarily either transfer stations or industrial service providers. This includes one in Berwick, which is a specialist site that treats and recovers mercury, there are two sites in Liverpool, one each in Hull, Wareham, Rugby and Honiton. The site in Plymouth is within HMS Devonport naval base. Augean has decided to keep the FIS name for the present as the brand is a market leader. The acquisition has helped to bolster the performance of the Augean Group as a whole in 2023. The oil and gas sector had been very depressed in 2023 so Aberdeen, Peterhead, Dundee and Great Yarmouth didn't perform particularly well but there was significant strength in the landfill, transfer and treatment parts of the business which have had pleasing outcomes over the last year. Augean has just won very big contract to accept low level radioactive waste arising from the Berkeley Power Station which will be a very significant project to work on and a good start to 2024.

Site Update

LB gave an overview of operational matters on site at Thornhaugh. She explained that:

- Current inputs into the site were around 8,000t per month which has been a predictable amount for some time.
- The construction of landfill cell 7C has been completed, with sign off on the CQA from the EA in November and commencement of filling in early December.
- There had been one leachate level exceedance due to heavy rainfall, however, this was remedied by pumping off the leachate. The incredibly wet winter with high rainfall has created significant challenges on the site with tankers being deployed regularly to take the excess leachate off site to Severn Trent facilities. Despite the proximity of several treatment and discharge sites, Severn Trent have been struggling to keep up with demand on their services as they have had their own capacity issues and clearly have been restricted in managing the discharge of treated water into already swollen rivers.
- There have been no complaints regarding amenity issues.
- The excavation of Phase 2 west had already started and was scheduled to last around 10 weeks.
- **PO** explained further that Augean had been granted a planning permission and a variation of the Environmental Permit in 2014 to remove the old waste deposited in Phases 1 and 2 and to place it in properly engineered landfill cells. These cells had been filled with non-hazardous waste using an old method of landfill management called 'Disperse and Attenuate'. This practice no longer complies with the Landfill Directive and has been superseded by the principle of engineered landfill containment. A number of site investigations had been carried out like trial pits and boreholes which had allowed the company to fully understand the emplaced wastes, which were principally non-hazardous wastes which had been backfilled with mineral waste some of which was clean mineral and some contaminated. The waste being currently excavated was being placed into Cell 7 C and any clean mineral waste was going to be used to fill an area of Cooks Hole. This solution provides a long-term containment of wastes, removes any pollution risk, and provides the most economically and environmentally viable solution to manage the site in the long term with confidence. The schedule of work over the next few years would be to progressively fill a new cell, cap it and move eastwards to the next engineered cell. Protocols are in place to ensure that moving the waste is safe. Contractors are well aware of the protocols. If there are any amenity issues like dust or odour, members of the public should contact the site as it is possible to deploy bowsers or deodorisers that can mitigate any issues.
- **AJ** commented that he was pleased about the move towards a contained engineered landfill and to provide a better environmental solution than the dilution/attenuate method. He wanted to encourage anyone with issues about dust and odour to get in touch either with him or with Augean directly, but he was pleased that there were controls in place to mitigate any potential occurrences and clear channels to be able to

ensure that anyone with problems could get in touch and hopefully resolve matters quickly.

Planning application update

PO reported that last year Augean had pre-application discussions and a scoping opinion from the local planning authority regarding the future of Cooks Hole Quarry and Thornhaugh Landfill. Those discussions, the feedback from the consultation process and the public exhibition held in October 2023 had enabled the final application to be drawn together. The application had been submitted and was awaiting validation. It was estimated that a decision would be reached around June or July.

The restoration plan and a series of plans illustrating the how the footpaths in the area would be made available as work on the sites progressed were shown. **PO** explained that the final number of footpaths was a substantial increase from the current situation. There had been some debate about the creation of a footpath along the stream, but the ecologists were keen to preserve that area of the site for a range of species to be left relatively undisturbed. A table of issues raised through the public consultation and how the various points made had been responded to by Augean was made available.

AJ said that as soon as the application was validated Peterborough would start their own consultation process. He hoped that all the major local issues had been resolved through the pre-application public consultation. As the application centred on the ecological benefit Natural England would be very interested in the proposals. Biodiversity Net Gain has just been introduced and this may create some debate as it is still a new concept that needed to be worked through in practical terms. He anticipated that the timetable suggested by **PO** was reasonably accurate depending on whether the application would need to go to Committee.

Environment Agency Update

GW reported that although there had been a minor exceedance in leachate levels as **LB** had explained this was managed properly. The weather conditions have been a considerable challenge for all similar sites. In general, the environmental performance of the site was good and not a cause for any concern.

Peterborough City Council Update

AJ reported that PCC's planning focus was on the preparation of the Local Plan. A significant number of sites had been put forward and were being assessed for their suitability. This process takes into consideration traffic and sustainability issues as well as mineral extraction sites particularly in the local area, there are quite a lot of sites proposed around Wittering. A further round of consultation regarding the sites is likely to happen in the autumn.

AJ said that with regard to the complex situation of Thornhaugh II, he had given some feedback to the site owners in terms in restoration. He hoped to have a better feel over next year for the fate of the site and was putting pressure on owners to clarify their position on the site before 2025. At Cross Leys the restoration requirements were progressing well, half of which are ecological enhancements the other half of site should start receiving inert

waste to start restoration of that portion of the site. **AJ** was keen for any problems with the site or its traffic movements to be reported to him as they should have consideration for their neighbours.

There would be a review of the minerals and waste plan in next couple of years. Recent permissions were making the situation difficult for Peterborough and Cambridgeshire who work jointly on minerals and waste.

Community Funds

HH asked about Community Funds. **GB** explained that in 2023 they had exceeded £1m for the first time. The most significant funds come from the Landfill Tax funds which for the southern sites yields a funding pot of over £500,000. Additionally, the area around the ENRMF benefits from the LLW Fund which was worth around £20,000 and all sites benefit from some discretionary sponsorship. All the sites have contributed to foodbanks in their own areas. Augean has also given each employee a day per year volunteering for local community projects.

Any other business

HH queried the end date for Cooks Hole and Thornhaugh. **PO** confirmed that it was proposed that the sites would be restored by early 2042.

Date of next meeting

A doodle poll for the next meeting would be circulated perhaps for a May meeting prior to determination of the application. A site tour could be made available with hopefully better weather conditions.