

## **Thames Water Meeting 28 November 2022**

73 people in attendance - members of the public, Councillors (SCC, WBC & CPC), Thames Water Representatives, CPC Clerks

SCC Cllr E Townsend introduced the agenda for the meeting, thanked Thames Water (TW) for attending and invited TW representatives to introduce themselves.

### Clean Water and Supply

Cranleigh's water supply comes from Netley Mill (NM) and supplies 8,500 properties, Cranleigh is considered an island zone.

There have been some major issues that have affected the NM reservoir resulting in various losses and outcomes – loss of supply, power, disinfection process.

It was explained that if any poor quality water enters the NM system the whole system will shut down until the poor quality water has been dealt with.

There will be an upgrade to the system and a new pipe installed to remove the reliance on NM, there will be £20million for works with £2.7 million for works currently in progress.

It was asked how long before the new system would be in place. TW said the timeline for the installation is for completion by 2025.

It was raised that a plan had been circulated that the new pipeline would go though the Cranleigh Showground. TW asked to see the plan. TW did not confirm this is the final route but confirmed the 9km of new pipeline would be laid.

Concern was raised as to the impact the plans would have to Shalford, as the new pipeline would take water from Shalford to NM. TW explained that the system and water volume are sufficient to move between the sites.

A comment was made that the South East is considered a high water stress area, with more housing allocated, and asked where has the investment been so far for Cranleigh and surrounding areas?

TW were asked why are tankers being used along Woodland Avenue? There were 3 tankers a day for 10 days to deliver water; residents let the tanker drivers use their facilities, as the tankers were parked for long periods of time along Woodland Avenue. There then was a second visit of tankers which on this visit the tankers were removing water from Cranleigh. A request was made for better communication from TW, who agreed to look into these incidents and said they felt that housing areas should not be used for parking of tankers. Tankers are only used in an event situation such as when a treatment plant fails, so that tankers can take water from hydrants. Comments were made that provision needs to be made for the future. TW will speak with their regional operations team. With regard to Woodland Avenue, a TW representative was not available on site.

A water station was provided in Village Way car park when a significant part of Cranleigh was without water. It was not well staffed and there was not enough water available. It is requested that a better coordinated response is made by TW in the future. TW said this was not acceptable as water stations are key in their response. It was explained that an email is sent for staff to attend and support the water stations. TW will feed this information back.

TW water explained that the work carried out so far has made a big difference and there will be more improvements over the next 6-12months. After works to pipelines have been completed, some homes suffer a drop in pressure that is so low their boiler will not start. What is happening to the pressure and is it being monitored? TW explained that this area is gravity fed, so it would be hard to actively manage the pressure and there is no current way to manage the pressure. When a new pipeline is added there is usually an increase in pressure rather than a reduction.

Will a copy of the slides be made available – yes.

It was asked how long did TW think the outage lasted in August 2022. TW explained they use a customer guarantee scheme which is enacted after 12hrs of a water outage. It was highlighted to TW that a customer had been told their outage was 15hrs, but they were unable to get water in their home for 4 days. TW will take their details and look into it.

A question was asked if residents have to submit a claim to receive the compensation. TW explained that the customer guarantee scheme is an automatic payment once there has been an outage of more than 12hrs. There is the possibility that is you are on the boundary of an area you may get missed and you will need to phone to claim through the customer guarantee scheme.

It was asked if it was known how many residents from Woodland Avenue had received compensation. TW said that the information could be too detailed to limit to one road and there could be a GDPR consideration.

Some customers have received their compensation and others have not, although they were unable to get water from their tap. TW thought that this due to some kind of pressure being present in the system, which would mean a payment would not be given if it was within the 12hr timeframe.

Thames Water telephone system – hour long wait for calls to be answered. Request for call back system.

### Leaks

TW said leaks and bursts have been reasonably stable over the last few years. They replaced 52km of mains in Cranleigh. Most were installed in the 1940's and 1970's. TW have replaced 2.7km of asbestos cement pipes since 2020 and will replace a further 2.4km by 2025. TW said there has been a reduction in the level of mains repairs and supply interruptions since 2020. TW are aware of vulnerable customers.

Request for better supervision of contractors to prevent damage to gas and communication infrastructure when repairs to water pipes are made. Some residents of Summerlands had been without gas, water and electricity for a period of time due to contractors damage this year. There have been temporary metal plates for 3 weeks on the road in Park Mead, which are very noisy as vehicles passed over them at night disrupting residents' sleep.

A question was asked about the amount of fines for water leaks in this area. TW said there are no local figures as performance is measured across the business. The fine last year was £7m and the year before was £10m. TW explained that their leakage targets had been reached for the last few years, but this year has been difficult due to the warm weather. A question was asked about a leak below new build flats which the resident is being billed by TW. TW said that the resident should take it up with the developer under warranty, as the property was built less than 12 months when the leak began, but TW can offer a dispensation to deal with the first leak for free.

A member of the public raised that they had a period of 8 leaks in 5 years and since they have had a new network added they have had no more leaks, but the tankers do appear to effect the pressure and supervision of the sub-contractors is poor, also is it correct the first leak is not charged. TW were happy to hear the new network had resolved the leaks, TW highlighted the water system in the area is gravity fed and they would look at more supervision of their team. TW confirmed the first leak is free.

It was asked if there was a correlation between the new developments and the water leaks. TW explained that the network shows no link between the new housing and water leaks, but localised digging near water pipes can effect the water in those areas.

A leak in Guildford Road that appeared in August was only fixed last week.

A request was made for TW to attend the Flood Forum again.

TW said the current leakage levels are 26% at Alderbrook and 22% at Lambswood which TW account for a third from TW pipes, a third from customer pipes and a third from the trunk main. TW said there has been a 10% reduction on leaks to date. TW will use customer metering to find the actual customer usage. They will concentrate on Cranleigh at the expense of other areas. They aim to reduce leaks by 50% by 2050. A request was made for a timeline on replacement of water pipes.

TW said compensation for loss of water supply should be automatic but they are aware certain customers do not automatically receive it and they will need to apply.

A question was raised in regard to businesses claiming compensation, although it was acknowledged that Castle Water had taken over from TW. TW explained that Castle Water are independent from TW and that businesses will need to contact their supplier.

A question was asked if TW were aware of the changes to the Who guidelines on asbestos pipes as there are uncertainties and limitations in the data on the use of asbestos pipes for drinking water. TW said they had contacted the DWI and are following their guidelines. TW said there is no consistent evidence available about oral ingestion of asbestos fibres. They have done intensive sampling in the village, although intensive sampling is not done in the UK. The results from three samples showed asbestos fibres at 2 and 1 fibre per mil. In the USA, tests there should fibres at 700,000 per mil.

The Civic Society and Surrey Wildlife Trust undertook phosphate sampling this summer and measured 2.5ppm near to the sewerage works. TW said that up until two years ago, they did discharge untreated sewage into watercourses, but now recognise this is unacceptable to customers and to the environment.

### Sewage

TW explained that the Cranleigh Sewage Treatment Works serve 16,000 people and discharges treated and untreated effluent into Cranleigh Waters. The capacity is 107 litres per second and once this is exceeded the plant uses storm tanks. Once the storm tanks are exceeded, the effluent discharges into Cranleigh Waters without biological treatment. They said untreated effluent had been discharged into Cranleigh Waters 41 times in 2020, 34 times in 2021 and 21 times so far in 2022. TW said they plan to upgrade the Cranleigh Sewage Treatment Works from 107 litres per second capacity to 144 litres per second, an increase of 35%. They will do this by increasing the standing tank by 970 m<sup>3</sup>, an additional sludge tank of 270m<sup>3</sup> and two new Meccana filters. They hope to be compliant for phosphorous by 22/12/24 and flow aspects by 31/03/25.

TW asks residents to contact them about the evening and night time odour when it happens to help them find the cause, and to register the odour with WBC Environmental Health. They said it may be caused by temperature inversion, when smell rises with hot air during the day and crashes down as temperature reduces at night fall.

TW were asked how the Cranleigh Sewage Treatment Plant compares against a new sewage treatment plant. TW said phosphorous levels are 2m/l and ammonia 4m/l. Staff check the levels daily and there are huge fines for breaches measured against their permit. TW were asked if a new sewage treatment plant is a possibility and they said that the current sewage treatment plant has plenty of land to expand. They were asked if they are confident that the Cranleigh Sewage Treatment Plant can cope once the outfall from Dunsfold is connected. TW said they cannot give assurances, especially if the weather continues with the much heavier downfalls.

TW have offered a site visit for Cranleigh Parish Council and other interested parties.

There was a report of a 60 hour and 300 hour discharge into Cranleigh Waters of untreated effluent. TW offered for engineers to meet on site to discuss these two problems.

Cllr E Townsend thanked representatives from Thames Water for attending the meeting and urged members of the public to continue to report issues to Thames Water.

**Actions from the Meeting:**

- Thames Water invited to participate in the Flood Forum again.
- Thames Water invited the Parish Council (Cllr K Gould) for a tour of the Cranleigh Sewage Treatment Plant.
- Thames Water agreed to meet two parties to discuss discharge into Cranleigh Waters.
- Thames Water to provide timeline on replacement of pipes.
- Request for call back system to be added to telephone system.
- Better supervision of contractors making roadside repairs.
- Thames Water to provide a copy of the meeting slides.