

Dear Andy,

I hope you are well. Please find below some further details answering a number of the questions raised by local residents at the Parish Council meeting on Thursday 21st April. I have attached a PDF of the presentation which I gave – I have checked that the hyperlinks and references are accessible in this format.

1. Development

The residents raised concerns about a proposed development of 17 homes by Morrish Homes at Duker Close, Martinstown. Subsequently both you and one of the residents have provided some information from the developer which was shared at a meeting in January. Wessex Water has assessed the capacity of our sewerage system at this location and confirmed, to the developer, that we can accommodate the foul sewage from this development and that we would not accept any surface water flows into the sewer, as we advise with all new developments. To date, planning permission has not been submitted or obtained for this development (to the best of our knowledge), if planning permission is granted then we would work more closely with the developer to specify any particular requirements which we may have and undertake any further modelling which might be required once there is greater certainty of the development details.

2. Maintenance

To date, we have undertaken CCTV surveys of over 10,000m of sewer length, specifically in the village to assess the integrity of the sewer and have improved c.340m, with more work planned. The focus is on the sewerage assets where we have ownership and responsibility for, as we do not have rights to improve the private drainage system from private properties to our public system. Our contractors, OnSite, undertook some relining work for a three week period starting on 11th April, around the time of the Parish Council meeting. We have an ongoing programme of CCTV surveying of the sewer to understand the integrity of the sewer and locations where repair work is further needed to reduce the level of groundwater infiltration. To date, we have found a limited number of areas where re-lining has been required and addressed those but we continue to investigate as illustrated in the table below. A sewer lining scheme was previously undertaken in Autumn 2019 in several lengths of public sewer within the Martinstown SPS catchment area.

In addition, we have undertaken maintenance work to the Martinstown sewage pumping station to increase the capacity of the pumps enabling greater flows to be pumped forward into the Dorchester sewerage system for treatment. These works were completed on 13th July 2021, enabling flows of up to 15l/s to be pumped forward, the permitted pass forward flow (level permitted by the EA is 10l/s), so we are treating in excess of the permit requirements.

I have spoken to the Sewerage Manager responsible for this area to review the frequency with which the pumps operate and the pumping rate. Looking at the data from the beginning of May 2021, the pumps operate very frequently, typically 10 minutes of pumping following by 10 minutes when there is no pumping, and the pumped flow rate is between 12-13l/s at all times. This means that despite the recent dry weather the pumping station is operating due to the level of groundwater ingress into the system. This is more apparent when looking at the night time flows, between 1am and 3am when we would expect little anthropogenic flows – people flushing toilets, showering or using appliances. At these times there is a slight change with the pumps operating for 8 minutes with a 12 minute respite, again pump rates are between 12-13l/s, and above the permitted flow requirement. We would expect the water table to drop over the next month or two, to below the level of the public and private sewers, reducing the level of infiltration and frequency with which the pumps operate.

Given the recent improvement works to the sewage pumping station and completion of the relining works, we need to monitor the situation over the autumn/winter period when groundwater levels start to rise again to understand how effective these improvements have been. We will undertake further CCTV surveys where required and assess whether any further improvements are needed, the location of these and timescale.

Water Recycling Centre (WRC)		Details by Sewage Pumping Station (SPS)											Completed					Programmed				
Site Name	DMP Exc.	SPS Name	IRP	D/Map	FSO Driver	Historical	Tankering	Historical Overpumping	Total CCTV	2015+ CCTV Meterage	Total Rehab Meterage	2015+ Rehab Meterage	2015 - 16	2016 - 17	2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20	2020 - 21	2021 - 22	2022 - 23	2023 - 24	2024 - 25
DORCHESTER		Egdon Glen P.S.							0	0	0	0										
DORCHESTER		Frampton (Muckleford) SPS	Y	Y		Y			4,952	2,190	37	37	S		I	IS			I	S	I	
DORCHESTER		Frampton, Southover							1,079	1,079	0	0			I	IS						
DORCHESTER		Higher Woodsford, Park Drive							963	0	0	0										
DORCHESTER		Hybris Business Park							0	0	0	0										
DORCHESTER		Martinstown, Winterbourne Abbas		Y		Y			10,804	8,308	343	343	I		I	IS			I	S	I	
DORCHESTER		Moreton, Queens Drive							0	0	0	0										
DORCHESTER		Muckleford / Stratton					Y		1,102	828	0	0	S		I	IS						
DORCHESTER		Owermoigne SPS	Y	Y		Y			10,941	10,646	275	275	S	I	S	I	I					
DORCHESTER		Stratton (Mill Lane) SPS				Y			881	347	0	0			I	IS						
DORCHESTER		Warmwell, Crossways of B3390							0	0	0	0										

I have looked into occurrences of surcharging manholes within the village and complaints about sewage debris. I was unable to find any specific incidents and photographs but whenever this does occur we make it a priority to respond so that we can resolve the issue and clean up as required. It is important that residents do pass this information on to us as it helps us to better understand the situation and ensure that we work to resolve the problem.

I can confirm that Martinstown is within the list of 50 groundwater influenced storm overflows which we are currently assessing for nature based solutions. We are currently undertaking some high level feasibility work with our consultants with a view to addressing these, where possible, by the end of this AMP period, i.e. by March 2025.

3. Ecology

The storm overflow at the SPS discharges into the South Winterborne, which achieves moderate ecological status from the Environment Agency. More info on the river is available at [South Winterbourne | Catchment Data Explorer | Catchment Data Explorer](#).

We also take ecological samples up and downstream of some storm overflows of concern across our region. As the discharges are intermittent the invertebrate community can detect an impact that may be missed by water quality samples, since these samples cannot always be taken when the discharge is occurring due to access or health and safety concerns. We measure outfall impact by taking invertebrate kick samples in spring and autumn up and downstream of the outfall and comparing the number of taxa, a measure of diversity, and the average score per taxa (ASPT), a measure of the sample's sensitivity to organic pollution. If either of these indices shows a significant decline in the downstream sample then the outfall is considered to cause a problem. We have sampled upstream and downstream of the storm overflow from Martinstown SPS in 2017 and 2020:

	WHPT number of taxa	
	Upstream	Downstream
Autumn 2017	19	25
Spring 2020	28	32
Autumn 2020	16	19

From this information, we can see that the number of taxa is higher in the downstream samples and there is an increase in diversity with little evidence of a significant ecological impact.

4. Low Water Pressure

Please find attached some information on low water pressure, covering tips for homeowners and contact details to arrange for Wessex Water to check the pressure within an area or property :[Low pressure | Wessex Water](#)

Information on Storm Overflows

We have provided further updated information on Storm Overflows on our website:

- Our Storm Overflow page (<https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/services/sewerage/storm-overflow>) includes more details of the issue.
- Information on the location and frequency of operation of Wessex Water Storm Overflows can be found on our Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan Portal at <https://wessexwater.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=e371301c2>

[4ca4228b36db3a3a6ba8560](#). Please look at the 'Performance' tab under the 'Storm Overflows' section as this links to a spreadsheet detailing the location, status and performance of all of our storm overflows fitted with Event Duration Monitoring (EDM), including information on known environmental impacts. This includes data on all start & stop times for each storm overflow for 2021.

- We have published our [storm overflows improvement plan 2022-25](#), which sets out how we aim to address storm overflows over the next three years.

What are we doing to improve Storm Overflows?

We are committed to completely eliminating the discharge of untreated sewage, starting with storm overflows that discharge most frequently and those that have any environmental impact. Every month we're investing more £3 million to reduce storm overflows, with £150 million being spent between 2020 and 2025. In an ideal world we wouldn't have storm overflows at all – they are a legacy from the past to protect properties from flooding, which have no place in the 21st century.

The Government has established a [storm overflows taskforce](#), of which we are a member, to consider how best to ensure that overflows do not cause harm. Eliminating storm overflows across England and Wales will require several decades of sustained increased investment and would cost between £300bn and £500bn, so the immediate focus is to identify those overflows that will potentially cause environmental or public health harm, addressing those and then progressively working through the others.

There are only two possible approaches to eliminating overflows; separation to stop stormwater entering the combined sewer, or constructing large storage tanks, which would have significant carbon consequences, cost billions and would be hugely disruptive.

We need Government to change legislation so developers cannot connect surface water to combined sewers which is making the matter worse. There is also the need for water companies to be able to release rainwater only directly into a watercourse.

Ofwat, the economic regulator, needs to prioritise investment, which it tightly controls to keep bills down, so water companies can solve the problem.

We are using the EDM data to determine where storm overflows are not operating as we would expect and investigating them through the [Storm Overflow Assessment Framework](#). This provides a framework in which to identify storm overflows which discharge frequently and address the issues they cause through improvements. Since 2000 we have invested £181 million on upgrading 582 storm overflows across our region, with a further £150 million set aside for improvements between 2020 and 2025.

Our plans for tackling overflows will in the future be documented in our Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans – which can be found at <https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/environment/drainage-and-wastewater-management-plan>.

I hope this information is helpful. Please do let me know whether it would be useful to arrange a more specific meeting with local residents to discuss concerns around flooding and development with colleagues who are working in this area.

Kind regards,

Ruth

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