

Document 9b - reply from Environment Agency

From: DCIS Enquiries <DCISEnquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk>

Sent: 12 November 2024 09:34

To: clerk@slaptonparishcouncil-devon.gov.uk

Subject: General Enquiry: 36899, Meeting re SWW Slapton Sewage Treatment Works

Dear Bella Moor,

Thank you for your email dated 20/10/2024 regarding Slapton Sewage Treatment Works.

We appreciate that, as with all storm overflows across the country, there is much public interest in reducing discharges from this asset.

In the first instance, we would refer you to the [Storm Overflows Discharge Reduction Plan](#) which highlights the Government's long-term targets for Water Companies in this matter.

We wish to clarify a point of potential confusion in your enquiry. Storm overflow compliance is mainly assessed under Condition 2.3.3, referring to Table S3.3. Reference to 'unusual weather conditions' in the permit is largely related to collection of treated effluent samples, which is a separate matter. Under Condition 2.3.3(a) and (b), storm discharges (and/or discharges into the storm tank) may only occur when the site is passing forward the required 'Flow to Full Treatment' (FFT), which represents the upper limit of treatment capacity. At Slapton Sewage Treatment Works, the Flow to Full Treatment limit is set at 11.8 litres per second. Flows in excess of this must only be received due to rainfall and/or snowmelt. In this respect, rainfall which leads to a storm discharge does not necessarily have to be 'unusual' in nature, but all of the requirements of the aforementioned permit conditions do have to be met prior to discharge.

The Environment Agency uses various intelligence and undertakes assessments to identify potentially non-compliant storm overflows. We then consider a number of factors to determine sites that may require further investigation. We are currently looking into compliance of storm discharges at Slapton Sewage Treatment Works, following a report of visible impact downstream of the discharge point in 2024. We are unable to provide further detail at present, as enquiries are ongoing. However, we hope this reassures that the matter is being looked at, and that we expect improvements.

We would be happy to attend a virtual meeting to discuss this further but would suggest that this goes ahead in the early new year. Currently, representatives have availability for a 1-hour meeting on the 8th January (10:00am) or 10th January (15:00pm). This would be an MS Teams meeting and we would request that attendees are limited to Parish Council members, rather than a public meeting. In addition, we would suggest it would be beneficial for a South West Water representative to be present, as they hold the technical knowledge of the site infrastructure/operation. If you do not consider this appropriate, please let us know.

If you could let us know which date/time is preferred, and provide an invite recipient, we can organise the meeting.

Please get in touch if you have any further queries or questions regarding your enquiry.

Kind Regards,

Elisavet Manioti

Customers and Engagement Officer

Environment Agency | Manley House, Kestrel Way, Exeter, EX2 7LQ

Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly enquiries team:

Email : DCISEnquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

From: clerk@slaptonparishcouncil-devon.gov.uk <clerk@slaptonparishcouncil-devon.gov.uk>

Sent: 20 October 2024 14:20

To: Enquiries, Unit <enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk>

Cc: SPC Councillors <spc@slaptonparishcouncil-devon.gov.uk>

Subject: ref: 241022/KT03 - Meeting re SWW Slapton Sewage Treatment Works

Dear Sir/Madam

Following complaints from local residents, Slapton Parish Council met with SWW at Slapton Sewage Treatment Works in June 2024 for a tour and to better understand the reasons for overflow releases into Slapton Ley. The SWW Manager, who conducted the tour, was very helpful and explained that Slapton Sewage Treatment Works is accepting more wastewater than it was designed for and that heavy rainfall is the cause of overflow releases, which appear to be permitted under permit number 203034 during 'unusual weather conditions'.

However, Slapton Parish Council do not consider such releases as acceptable given the sensitive nature of Slapton Ley and its SSSI and NNR status and note that available data show overflow releases happened 97 times in 2023 for a total of 1,417 hours. They are aware that such releases have continued to occur in 2024 although they do not have access to current 2024 data.

They would very much appreciate the Environment Agency's time in helping them to better understand what is and isn't permitted, how overflow releases can be reduced either through permit variations or pressure on SWW to upgrade the works to meet the capacity requirements – especially given heavy rainfall (the reason given by SWW for the releases) can no longer be considered 'unusual' – and, moreover, what Slapton Parish Council should report back to its concerned residents, who are keen to make this a political and headline issue.

Slapton Parish Council would be grateful for the opportunity to discuss this further with someone in the local Devon and Cornwall Environment Agency Offices, either in person or via video conference.

Please could you let me know, who I should contact to arrange this?

Kind regards, Bella

Bella Moor
Clerk and RFO, Slapton Parish Council
Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

email: clerk@slaptonparishcouncil-devon.gov.uk

Tel: 01548 312090

Website: <https://slaptonparishcouncil-devon.gov.uk/>



IN COLLABORATION WITH SUDC, NALC, DOW, COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS

At SPC we work flexibly so while it suits me to email now, I do not expect a response or action outside of your own working hours as we respect your work/life balance.