

Welsh Water Meeting at Penmaen Hall 22nd June 2022 7pm

Roy Church chaired the meeting. Community Councillors present: Jennifer Griffiths, Helen James, Sue Mobbs, Swansea Councillor Lynda James and 20 residents of the local area. An attendance list was passed around for the public to add their names and e-mail details.

Roy introduced Jon Taylor the Senior Business Improvement Manager with Welsh Water. Roy mentioned that according to Welsh Water they are a non-profit organisation with 69p in the £ being spent on maintenance and repairs.

Jon Taylor proceeded with his presentation. He stated there had been 32 interruptions in the last 12 months and that Penmaen/Nicholaston was the worst area in Wales with Perriswood being the worst area in 2007. He explained that the water comes from the Usk reservoir via Llandeilo Treatment Works and is stored in two places one being in Clyne. The water is pumped from Parkmill to reservoir on Cefn Bryn. There is no connection with other systems. It is split into zones with no inter connectivity. The only solution at the moment is to repair, use overland pipes or tankers to provide water. The problem on Gower is that they are cement lined asbestos pipes which will split the whole 3mts when they fail. They take longer to dig out and higher properties lose their water. WW have installed a number of valves and hydrants which can now isolate areas not having breaks which will minimise disruption. There is one mains supply and the line goes through a triple SSSI site which means they cannot dig out a new line. They intend to instal more valves and hydrants on the main line source. They have rebuilt meter and pressure reducing valves and also installed pressure monitor logger. At the moment the line around the Penmaen Horseshoe road is all interconnected so this means turning all homes off to deal with a burst. The bursts in the system can be caused by air pressure hence the need to regulate/lower the water pressure on old sections of pipe. The new valves installed allow better pressure management and also the monitors installed let WW know about problems quite often before a customer calls them.

All work done in recent years has been Short term mitigation or “sticking plaster repairs”: whilst short term problems persist they will set up Satellite stores in Parkmill for pipes and bottled water supply.

WW recognise that the issues face in this locality are the worst in the whole county area and so it has been decided that there will be a major overhaul on some of this pipework with Construction and completion by April 2023.

First section: WW are going to fully renew pipe from Cefn Bryn to Nicholaston.

Second section: New pipes to be installed around the horseshoe which will stabilise the network.

Third section: Pipes to Nicholaston Hall to be renewed in 3” MVP pipe.

Feasibility study has been done and it is realised that the pipes are coming to the end of their useful life. The new pipes will be plastic and where necessary will be inserted inside and along the length of the existing concrete pipes- the “pipe crack technique”

Funding has been approved for £660,000 - £750,000 for the completion of these works.

Jon advised that Welsh Water have to produce an Investment Plan every 5 years for the Regulator and these works are part of that Plan.

Roy then opened up the meeting for any questions and answers from Jon.

1. What could go wrong?

Jon stated that he knows the local area well and has been shocked at the increasing failure rate so he wants to ensure that WW get this scheme right this area had the worst served customers which had been shown to the Directors so the scheme would go ahead. There could be delays if rainfall is low but DELAY doesn't mean STOPPED.

2. Will water pressure be evened out?

Jon said regulator reducer valves will be taken out. It won't even out the pressure but more people will receive more consistent pressure.

3. A4118 has had work done there is there any more planned for that area?

Jon confirmed no more work planned for the A4118 but he advised calming the network down will mean that area will become more stable. The current plan is to target the worst areas.

4. Roy asked about the 5 year plan and should we be looking at the next 5 year plan for works to be carried out.

Jon explained that we are in Year 3 of the present 5 year plan which is 2019 - 2024. It is more costly to undertake work in Wales due to the nature of the landscape compared with other areas. Jon said they would have to do repairs when necessary but the A4118 would not be put into the next plan.

5. Compensation for customers.

Jon advised any compensation is driven by Ofwat. Water off for 24 hours for business customers £50 and household customers £20.

Welsh Water have a separate scheme, a household register for worst served customers: anyone off for 3 hours (but he didn't say how many times) over a 3 year period they would not have to pay for their water supply rates. 68 households in Penmaen affected and 125 identified as having a poor service. The Community Council could ask WW to implement this concession for this area. Jon will also speak to individuals separately regarding their property and their position in claiming this compensation.

6. Will the ring main going around the horseshoe be going onto private land or properties?

Jon confirmed it would not.

7. Jon will ask Bruce to find the valves outside his house.

Jon concluded by saying that under investment in 70s, 80s 90s by Hyder has created these end of life problems and an increasing amount of failures in the pipework. There had not been enough proactive work carried out which was a legacy of under investment for many years unfortunately.

Roy thanked Jon for his time and effort in explaining the current position and for the future plans.

The meeting closed at 8pm