

# Keeping you informed

## Odour issues from waste site at Great Heck

8 October 2015

**Our role is to protect and improve the environment so everyone can enjoy the benefits of a clean, safe and healthy place to live, work and play.**

**We issue environmental permits that set standards for those operating waste management facilities. They must adhere to these in order to minimise their impact on the environment and the local community.**

### Our role

We regulate operations with environmental permits in a variety of ways, including proactive site inspections which are often unannounced.

Where an operator is not complying with their permit, we will take action to secure compliance. This can take the form of advice, notices and ultimately, legal action or revoking the permit. We also respond to reports of pollution from members of the public.

### The waste site operator

**Wagstaff Total Waste Management Ltd (WTWML) of Long Lane, Great Heck began operations as a vehicle dismantling and metal recycling site.**

WTWML entered voluntary liquidation on 13 July 2015. Soon after this the liquidator disclaimed the lease to the land.

The Environment Agency is in contact with the liquidator regarding the requirements of the environmental permit.

### Our regulation of this site

Our Environment Officers have visited the site regularly to assess compliance with the permit.

In 2012, WTWML started to accept mixed recyclable wastes with the intention of producing a glass aggregate. They applied to vary their existing permit to allow this activity and we issued the modified permit in March 2013 which specified conditions on how the site should be operated.

The operator's performance declined in 2014 and our officers noted this and as a result we issued notices to the operator requiring them to meet the conditions. Failure to comply with a notice is a criminal offence.

We have visited the site with North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service (NYFRS) on several occasions between July 2014 and May 2015 to identify improvements to storage of waste on site. NYFRS were subsequently called out to fires at the site on several occasions in May/June and September/1 October.

We served a suspension notice on 2 June.

**We have recently made arrests as part of the ongoing investigations into the running of the site and will take strong action against anyone who has harmed the environment.**

We are not able to discuss details of the investigation at this time.

### What happens now?

Our officers have met with the landowner to discuss their responsibilities and have requested that they provide a plan of action to ensure waste at the site is removed quickly and safely. The landowner has started to remove some waste from the site but it will take time and will be very expensive.

NYFRS are performing daily checks, morning and evening, looking for any signs of re-ignition. They will be providing advice to the land owner as required on steps that can be taken to further reduce the risk of fire.

## Nuisance from the site

Incident reports of nuisance from members of the public increased substantially in September 2015

We will continue to monitor the situation. We have deployed some specialist Air Quality Monitoring equipment in the village today, Thursday 8 October. The data gathered will help us inform Public Health England so that they can issue the correct guidance to the public.

We are working with the fire service to check any potential risks that fires from the remaining waste may pose.

Smoke may be an issue over the coming days if smouldering material is disturbed on site.

Odour will continue to be present until the offending waste is removed.

If you have concerns regarding health impacts of the smoke or odour you should contact your GP or NHS 111 for advice.

## High priority site

We would like to reassure the public that this is a priority site for us and we are working hard to make sure that the land owner remediates this site to the required standard as soon as possible.

We appreciate that you wish to see the restoration of the site as soon as possible, however, the timescales are influenced by the commitment and ability of the landowner. Our dedicated regulatory officer will be challenging any delays that arise and will continue to regularly visit the site.

Nigel Adams MP is aware of our work at this site and we continue to work closely with professional partners such as Selby District Council, Public Health England and NYFRS. We will ensure that local elected members and residents are kept up to date on how the works are progressing. We plan a further newsletter update as and when the situation changes.

## How can you help us?

The Environment Agency runs a 24-hour incident hotline. You can use this number to tell us if the site is causing pollution.

Our hotline number is 0800 807060.

However, you can be assured that we regularly visit the area.

**Our Regulatory Waste Team for North Yorkshire can assist you with any specific queries related to environmental matters that are not covered in this newsletter.**

**You can contact them through our National Customer Contact Service number 03708 506506.**