

**Advanced Proteins Liaison Group Meeting  
4.00pm Friday 24 April 2020**

The following members were on the teleconference:

<b>Chair</b>	Karen Bradley (Member of Parliament)
<b>Environment Agency</b>	Steve Thomason – Installations Team Leader, West Midlands
<b>Councillors:</b>	Cllr Harold Jennings - Cheddleton Parish Council Cllr Mike Bowen- SMDC District Council
<b>Advanced Proteins:</b>	Barney Williams - Technical Director Charlotte Wood - Minutes
<b>Animal Health:</b>	See apologies
<b>Representing Residents:</b>	Patricia Duffy Ian Dakin
<b>Apologies:</b>	Stephanie Young (Trading Standards) Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) Stafford Office John Tunna Joe Smith

## **1. Welcome**

Karen Bradley (KB), Member of Parliament welcomed everyone on to the teleconference and asked each member to introduce themselves, as the meeting was being carried out via conference call.

## **2. Updates:**

### **Advanced Proteins**

KB asked Barney Williams (BW) to start with his update due to the number of changes at the Company which had taken place since the last meeting.

BW explained that on 17 February 2020, the rendering operations of John Pointon and Sons was sold to Anglo Beef Processors (ABP) By Products Division and became Advanced Proteins. BW explained that there are various divisions to ABP with over 50 sites and 11,000 staff in a very impressive portfolio of companies, with an enviable reputation in the meat industry and renewable energy sectors. ABP also operate two rendering facilities in Ireland, so they are well versed in the operational requirements of

the Cheddleton facility. BW added that Martin and Carl Pointon remain within the business, as well as the previous management team.

In addition, ABP Group have appointed Gerry McLoughlin as General Manager for the facility to oversee the integration of Advanced Proteins into the Group. Gerry is Head of Finance and Purchasing with ABP Group and he is keen to be involved with the liaison group going forwards. Unfortunately, due to the current coronavirus lockdown and the restriction on travel movements, this is not possible at this point as Gerry is based in Ireland. However, he is in continuous communication with the site on a daily basis.

### **Coronavirus Update**

KB asked BW what the Company is doing to ensure compliance in terms of the covid-19 outbreak. BW stated that the virus had presented many challenges, but the business continues to remain fully operational as key workers in the food supply chain.

BW explained that a coronavirus Cobra Team had been set up from the outset of the disease and there had been numerous major policy changes and physical measures implemented. As follows:

- Comprehensive guidance and procedures for the management team and their respective staff. Including health questionnaires and FAQ's.
- Daily Coronavirus teleconferences to update staff with new guidance or measures.
- The suspension of group meetings, replaced with teleconferences
- Segregation and social distancing, such as hiring in additional facilities to allow changing rooms to be separated out for different departments.
- Additional shower units for staff members
- Perspex screens in key areas to create segregation, and offices and canteen separation with strict social distancing rules (2m).
- Teams broken down and staggered break times. Likewise, staggered shower times.
- Personal anti-bacterial gel dispensers for all staff, topped up daily. In addition to constant thorough anti-bacterial cleaning throughout the site
- Thermal imaging temperature tests for every member of staff and visitors coming on to site and completion of health questionnaires.
- As well as non-essential visitors and contractors not being allowed on site, and those that are have separate welfare facilities to use.
- BW added that the Company have engaged with NHS groups to provide masks, visors and gloves to the NHS where possible.
- Ensuring that staff are not deprived of this equipment, with the main the focus on social distancing.
- Social distancing audits taking place several time during each day.
- BW explained that guidance changes frequently, so our procedures continue to evolve.

The committee unanimously agreed that the measures implemented were robust.

## **Environment Agency Report**

Steve Thomason (ST) stated that from the last meeting in October 2019 up to 20<sup>th</sup> April 2020, 51 incidents had been reported to the Environment Agency including x1 noise report. ST explained that 36 of these took place in April.

ST explained that there are a number of observations which may attribute to the spikes. One being that several reports had come in from slurry spreading and also that the site drone had identified a section of roof which required repair. ST added that another factor is that the site has had an increase of around 15 to 20% in raw material due to redirection of animal by products from a rendering site who have had a fire, but this is still within the permitted allowances.

ST added that it is also likely a variety of things have contributed to the increase, including people working from home or off work altogether due to the covid-19 restrictions.

ST explained that there have been 5 Schedule 5 reports in total since the last meeting, which require the operator to report incidents in line with the permit, including raw material doors which have been rectified, a damaged roof apex which has been repaired and several power cuts in the local area. In such instances the Thermal Oxidizer and biobed abatement systems can be affected.

ST added that there have been questions around the change of ownership and can confirm that the permits have been changed over to the new company, Advanced Proteins, from 17 February 2020. ST added that there has been no change to operations and the staff that were previously in place are still in place. Which was great news for the professional continuity of the business. ST continued that Advanced Proteins are proactively undertaking work on the Action Tracker and that all the 2019 work is completed, however some of the refurbishment work planned for 2020 is likely to be delayed due to covid-19.

ST concluded that it has been positive working with the company, and the new owners of the business seem to be committed to progress in accordance with the future environmental plans.

Ian Dakin (ID) asked ST if there had been any breaches of the permit, and ST confirmed that no permit breaches relating to Odour had been identified and the Company were in compliance of their odour management plan and the recent increase in raw material is still within the permitted waste volume that can come to site within the permitted hours.

## **Advanced Proteins Update**

BW added that Gerry McLoughlin has been working closely with the site team to implement ABP Group systems but will also be working pro-actively with BW on improvements which may require capital expenditure.

BW explained that an exposure in the roof of a raw material building was identified using a drone, the day after very high winds (19/3). The repair was not as straight

forward as it usually would be. For example, scaffolding contractors were not available and therefore a large tower crane had to be hired in which needed to be large enough to ensure that social distancing measures could be adhered to as the work was undertaken. However, the repair was completed within 12 hours.

BW added that Category 3 roof would be the next area to target, however this cannot be progressed until the lock down is lifted.

BW added that another factor for the recent increase in odour complaints was unusually high volumes of material which are linked to current consumer demand during lockdown. Also, as stated by ST earlier, the rendering industry in the UK was assisting a competitor who experienced a fire in autumn 2019 and this has led to an increase in the volume of by product deliveries to site. The company in question is likely to be operational again within 6 weeks. BW explained that the increased volume directly relates to an increase in the number of trailers that come back to site.

The Company continue to liaise with the UK Government through FABRA our trade association and also in industry working groups.

BW explained that site investigations for odour complaints are conducted by a multi-disciplined team. BW explained the abatement systems and technologies that control odour from the site. He also added that odour sensory training assists the team in identifying specific odours quickly during the investigations but also during routine odour checks every two hours during day to day operations.

BW added that large biobed filters which are the site's secondary abatement system (as the primary abatement system is the oxidisers), have undergone media rotation over the past two weeks which is done on an annual basis to optimise the efficiency of the beds.

KB agreed that there has been a few weeks of good weather and people are at home who would not normally be, and whilst there has been an issue there are also more people reporting who would not usually.

BW added that he completely understands and if someone is not used to the smell and then are suddenly at home during the day, it could be an issue. The recent complaints have galvanised the management to ensure they do everything within their power to detect any issues before they have an impact off site.

BW explained that in the previous meeting, ID raised that there had been complaints about HGVs passing through Wetley Rocks between 5am and 7am which were causing noise issues. BW asked ID if there had been any further feedback and ID explained that he had done some work with the local residents and BW had produced a fleet schedule to pass on to residents to identify vehicles. Unfortunately, ID has not had any forms returned as yet.

ID added that in recent weeks, the volume of traffic has dropped significantly which suggests that it is general haulage, not just Advanced Proteins. BW added that ID came to site and both BW and ID reviewed the fleet plan which was running between those hours and ID got to the point where he took the information to the residents and is waiting for feedback.

## **Animal Health**

KB asked if there was any update from Animal Health Officer and BW explained that there were no zoonotic diseases since the last meeting e.g. avian influenza/ foot and mouth. There are also no reports on the horizon.

APHA officers are currently working from home but the last APHA audit of the factory was undertaken in January 2020 and the site was fully compliant in all aspects of animal by product approvals.

## **Trading Standards**

KB asked if there was an update from trading standards. BW explained that Stephanie Young's health was much improved from the date of the last meeting.

There have been no major spillages since the last meeting.

## **3. AOB**

### Advanced Proteins view on the Liaison Meeting

Mike Bowen (MB) asked BW what Advanced Proteins (ABP) views were on the liaison group and BW explained that they are very keen to continue the proactive work which has been established since 2009. MB acknowledged this was good news.

Harold Jenkins (HJ) asked if the meetings could be held in a more professional setting at the factory in the future. BW explained that there is a suitable meeting room available which can be used going forwards.

### Mobile App

BW explained that there had been recent discussions with ST and BW regarding the use of the mobile app for complaint reporting. ID explained it would be good to trial with residents on the Liaison Group in the village to monitor and give feedback.

BW explained that there are questions which would need to be answered to ensure the efficacy of the tracker, particularly with regard to ensuring compliance with the Environment Agency reporting. It would be beneficial to meet up when lockdown restrictions are lifted so that the format could be viewed on a screen and the group could input their views.

KB asked if it is possible to have access to a beta version and would it be badged as Environment Agency, rather than Advanced Proteins so people would see it as independent.

ST commented that he did not think the Environment Agency would be able to “Badge” the app, as there is a National incident reporting system (NIRS) used at the Environment Agency which enables people to report incidents. The system has been developed over many years and is a very important reporting tool for Environment Agency, so it may be counterproductive to populate two platforms. There may be potential to cross compare data.

ST explained that if people wished to report an environmental incident or concern, they should call the Environment Agency free 24 hour incident hotline.

ID asked if a demo of the app could be arranged to view via Zoom and KB agreed this may be a good idea. ID to liaise with the designer of the app, Mr Paul Jones of Ostlers Lane and arrange.

#### Sliding Roof Trailer

HJ asked if there was any progress with the sliding roof trailer design. BW explained that it had been costed and the potential for a working trial would be progressed.

#### Lodge House

Pat Duffy (PD) asked if anything was being done with the Ashcombe Hall lodge house on the main road as it has fallen into disrepair. BW explained that he could not offer a definitive answer to this question as he was no longer involved in the Pointon estate but he would relay the question to the Pointon family and report back.

#### Minutes of Meeting

ID explained that a question was raised regarding the length of time for minutes to be published publicly, and if it is possible to publish a draft format soon after the meeting. KB explained that she has no issue with the minutes being published in draft, and that everyone who is at the meeting can discuss with people straight away.

ID added that a question was also raised regarding having the proceeding of the liaison committee being broadcast live. All agreed that due to the sensitive nature of some of the discussions this would not be possible.

All agreed that the 6-month frequency of the meeting was working and if a significant event happens in the meantime, an extra-ordinary meeting can be arranged.

**Date of next meeting:** 09 October 2020 – 16:00 hrs