

Rookery South RRF Community Liaison Panel

Meeting notes from Site visit to Rookery South

Date of site visit: Sunday 28 February 2010 (10.00am to 12.40pm)

Present at the site visit:

CLP members:

Nigel Milway	Chair of "Revamp" Ampthill
Hugh Roberts	MMAG
Barry Halton	Volunteer with Beds CPRE
Gary Summerfield	Ampthill Town Council/Central Bedfordshire Councillor
Lisa Frangiamore	Houghton Conquest Parish Council
David Cooper	Stewartby Parish Council
Alan Barnard	Maulden Parish Council
Peter Neale	Marston Moreteyne Parish Council
Richard Franceys	Resident
Ed (and son Joe) Hiam	Residents
D Stevens	Chair of Millbrook Parish Meeting

Covanta and advisor attendees:

Rachel Ness (Covanta)
Simon McKee (Covanta)
Alister Kratt (LDA Design)
Paul Jeffery (Peter Brett Associates)
David Spencer (Quantum PR)

Introduction:

At mtg 5 (December 2010) of the Rookery South Community Liaison Panel (CLP), members requested and Covanta agreed to arrange a site visit to the proposed application site. The site visit was arranged for Sunday 28th February 2010.

Site visit format:

Eleven members of the CLP attended the site visit. Initially CLP members, Covanta staff and advisors received a Health & Safety instruction from Paul Jeffery before visiting the site.

Rachel Ness (RN) and Alister Kratt (AK) gave an overview of the site and the features that would be focused on during this visit and distributed packs containing relevant plans. RN advised that the format of the site visit would be to provide factual information about the physical characteristics of the development proposals and where they would be provided on site. The site visit was not for the purposes of talking about the merits or otherwise of the proposal.

The key features focused on in the site visit included:

- Walking south along the proposed site access road on the western edge of Rookery North and Rookery South Pits to the pit edge where both the Energy from Waste (EfW) and Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) facilities would be located;
- Viewing pre-prepared marker posts on the edge of Rookery South pit that indicated the position, orientation and length/width of the EfW Facility;
- An overview of where the two balloons would be sited during the public exhibitions. The health and safety restrictions that prevent the balloons being tethered in the exact locations of the proposed RRF in the base of Rookery South pit were described and the presence of water and the water logged pit base conditions were self evident. Whilst the balloons would not be in exact locations, their flown heights would be accurate and general positioning would give a helpful indication of where the Facility would be visible from. In the event of adverse weather (high winds or heavy rain), the conditions for flying could result in the balloons being withdrawn;
- An overview of the proposed Low Level Restoration Scheme works that include the need to mitigate against land slumping through extracting clay and re-engineering several pit edges to prevent further erosion;
- Considering the views of the Facility from the Greensand Ridge (in particularly Houghton House and Ampthill Park) and the Forest Centre, with some debate on the design of the Facility and how it had been informed through the consultation process;
- An overview of the proposed access junction off Green Lane and some discussion of the preliminary HGV routing plan;

During the site visit there was discussion about various aspects of the proposals and a number of questions were raised with various representatives of the Covanta Team. Some of these are noted below for information and action:

Q. 1: Had Covanta considered positioning the RRF on the eastern edge of the Rookery South Pit, where the visual impact could potentially be lessened from Amptill and the Marston Vale Forest Centre?

Action: RN advised that she would seek a response on this from the Covanta Engineering Team and pass this on to the CLP (this is in hand).

Q. 2: Can the amount of money being initially offered by Covanta as a Community Trust Fund be increased? What levels of community trust funding is available at other EfW facilities? How does this compare to the Rookery funding levels?

Action: RN advised that the level of Community Trust Funding with the Rookery project was something that was being consulted on as part of the exhibitions and Covanta is interested to hear views on the amount and how it might be managed and spent. The amount offered (£150,000 in the first year of operation and £50,000 each year thereafter throughout the 35 year operational life) is the same as that offered in relation to other Covanta UK projects. RN agreed to present on this at a future CLP mtg (now due in April as time over ran at the last CLP mtg).

Q. 3: What will be the community benefits?

Answer / Action: CLP members were invited to visit the forthcoming public exhibitions to see what Covanta is proposing but these are all subject to consultation. RN agreed to present on this at a future CLP mtg (now due in April as time over ran at the last CLP mtg).

Q. 4 What would be the visual impact of Combined Heat and Power on the Marston Vale, particularly if there were to be pipes to nearby developments such as Nirah or Center Parcs? Would the piping be above or below ground?

Action: RN advised that this issue was scheduled to be discussed at the next meeting of the CLP and further information would be provided at that time (this has been done).

Q.5 Does Covanta know anything about the proposed development north of Bedford by WRG?

Response: Covanta was unable to advise of any information on such a project.