

Scottish Water Gairloch Stakeholder Group

Draft Meeting Minutes

Date of Meeting: Tuesday 23rd February, 6:30pm

Location: Via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Gairloch Community Representatives Alex Gray (AG)

Scottish Water Kevin Clifton (KC)
Gavin Steel (GS)

Apologies:

Paul Griffiths (SEPA), Ian McWhinney, John Port

Minutes

1. Welcome

Gavin Steel thanked AG for joining the meeting and apologised that he had only circulated a reminder at short notice.

2. Minutes of meeting held via MS Teams on 3rd November 2020

GS apologised that the minutes of the previous meeting had not been circulated. They had been a work in progress at the time of a renewal of Scottish Water's IT equipment and he had only recently retrieved them from his previous laptop. He would circulate them to the group after the meeting.

3. Actions and matters arising

GS explained that the most substantial item from the previous minutes was the discussion about winter sampling and the agreed trial period of the new treatment process. He confirmed that winter sampling had not been carried out, as SEPA had not been able to support this, and that the UV disinfection had operated throughout the winter period in light of this and the discussion at the previous meeting.

GS also noted that an update had not yet been produced for the wider community, but proposed that this be taken forward after the meeting, ahead of tourism re-opening and the normal dates of the bathing season.

4. SEPA / Sampling Update

GS reiterated PG's apologies on behalf of SEPA that they were not able to take part this evening.

GS noted that he had spoken to PG ahead of the meeting, who had asked him to relay an update. As members might have seen, SEPA had been significantly affected by a serious cyber attack over the Christmas period. In addition to the challenges of operating during the Covid-19 pandemic, this had resulted in disruption to many aspects of SEPA's operation. As had been expected before the cyber attack and discussed with the Stakeholder Group in November, sampling had not taken place over the winter months and there was not therefore any new bathing water sampling data to report.

AG asked if SEPA had now recovered from the cyber attack.

GS explained that he understood it was still in recovery phase with significant restrictions on normal IT systems, but that progress was being made. PG had advised that there was due to be a meeting this week to review the approach

to the 2021 Bathing Season in light of the public health situation and the recovery of SEPA's laboratory analysis capacity.

GS noted that PG had reflected SEPA's continuing commitment to the agreed trial period at Gairloch and the off-season sampling that was part of this. Barring unforeseen further challenges, PG was positive that sampling would be resumed during the bathing season and be able to take place over winter 2021/22.

KC proposed that Scottish Water engages with SEPA in order to bring a proposal to a Stakeholder Group meeting later in the year for a trial period operating without UV over winter 2021/22.

Action 1: Scottish Water and SEPA to identify a suitable programme for a winter trial period operating without UV over winter 2021/22 and bring this for discussion at a future Stakeholder Group meeting around the end of the 2021 Bathing Season.

5. Scottish Water Project Update

Odour concerns

KC noted that the installation of rubber matting to prevent release of odours from the inlet to the WWTW, upstream of the septic tanks, had been completed towards the end of 2020. A contractor was due to carry out work within the next month or so on the foreshore, near the Glebe pumping station, which would include exposing buried manhole covers and renewing gaskets, in order to address increased seawater ingress in this part of the network.

AG indicated that he had not heard of odour reports recently. KC and GS were not aware of any recent reports, but recognised that odour problems could be seasonal. It was hoped the work already completed and about to take place would result in an improvement. Even so, it was proposed to highlight the best reporting route to encourage people to inform Scottish Water directly if they did experience odours in future, which would help investigation and identification of appropriate remedial measures.

Disk filter

KC gave an update on progress with the supplier of the unit, Xylem.

He noted that a decision had been taken to proceed with replacing the wash water, which currently used recycled effluent from the treatment process, with clean water. Chlorine would also be added to discourage potential growth of biomass on the filter, which may be a factor in the issues experienced.

KC explained that plans were in place for further sampling after Easter to explore whether a finer filter mesh might be helpful, if it was found that the particles passing through the filter were too small to be caught by it. If this

potential option was taken, a further change to the backwash system would be required but this was feasible.

AG asked how much water was used for the cleaning process. KC explained that it was a relatively modest quantity and was not a continuous process, with automatic cleaning only taking place as part of a cycle when required.

KC noted that the temporary dosing arrangement that had been used for a short period towards the end of summer 2020 had been removed from site. Depending on continued monitoring of the disk filter's performance in drier periods this year, this might need to be deployed again – and a permanent system to allow for seasonal dosing was a potential fall-back if the ongoing efforts to optimise the disk filter were not successful.

WWTW trial period

As noted above, it was agreed that a proposal should be brought to the Stakeholder Group for a trial period operating without UV over the winter of 2020/21, as had been envisaged when the pilot operating period was agreed.

6. Communication review

GS indicated that he had hoped to give attention to the proposed update for the Gairloch and District Times (GDT before now, but had not yet done so. Given the limited attendance at the meeting, he suggested that he circulate a draft for all members' review as soon as possible, targeting the end of the week.

AG noted that the next deadline for the GDT was Friday 5th March so there should be time to catch this issue.

Action 2: Scottish Water to circulate a draft update for proposed publication in the Gairloch and District Times as soon as possible.

7. Any other business

There was no other business.

8. Date of next meeting

It was agreed that GS would circulate draft minutes via email and the proposed community update; and explore other members' views on whether a further meeting of the group was needed in the short term.

In the event that there was not felt to be need for a further meeting sooner, members could remain in touch via email. In that case, GS would propose a date towards the end of the 2021 bathing season, when there would hopefully

be some new sampling data to review, as well as a proposal to discuss for the proposed trial period and off-season sampling over winter 2021/22.

Action 3: Scottish Water to circulate draft minutes of November and February meetings; and to explore whether there was desire from members for a further meeting earlier than an August / September 2021 date, towards the end of the coming bathing season.