

Swaying stacks incidents at St Dennis mass burn incinerator:

Open email to residents from Councillor Fred Greenslade, 6th. February 2015

----- Original Message -----

From: Fred Greenslade – Cornwall Council

To: Pat Blanchard, John Pollard – Cornwall Council, David Buckle – SITA, Michael Dobson – SITA, Dick Cole – Cornwall Council, Eddy Martin – Cornwall Council,

Cc: Verna Hedley – St.Stephen in Brannel Council, Wendy Yelland – St.Dennis Parish Council

Sent: Friday, February 06, 2015 10:28 AM

Subject: Incinerator Stacks

Dear all

First of all apologies for the length of email but the topic demands it. I respectfully ask that it be read in full by all as there are some relevant questions included in the text.

Over the past few days I have witnessed from my front room window the movement that has been witnessed by many residents. I have also driven to the church and viewed from there as well as from Treviscoe as close to the site as was possible.

As a result of my concerns for the community at large I telephoned Mike Dobson regards public concerns and received responses by email. This exchange was previously circulated by Mrs Blanchard on my behalf, my thanks to you for that.

On the same day (Tuesday) I rang County Hall and requested an urgent discussion with John Pollard the Leader Of the Council.

Cllr Pollard rang me back within a half an hour. I explained the situation graphically and Cllr Pollard agreed to contact David Buckle as a matter of extreme urgency.

The responses from David Buckle are shown below in [blue](#).

These responses were sent before last night's events.

Dear Fred

I am sure you can share the information that I have received from David Buckle as below:

Dear John

We understand the concern the stack incident has caused in the community, please be assured we are looking into this as a matter of urgency.

To clarify the situation, during late afternoon of Monday 2nd February it was noticed that the more southerly stack was swaying significantly, whilst the more northerly stack appeared to be stationary. As a precautionary measure the site was evacuated at about 5.15pm. The stack stabilised, personnel were allowed back to collect belongings and leave site. Whilst the stack had stabilised, the opportunity was taken for the stack erector, Steelcon, to fix a bracket between the two stacks. This measure has proved successful.

The initial thoughts are that the cause seems to be low wind speeds matching the natural frequency of the stack (vortex shedding). The designers have confirmed that the stacks are designed to withstand such induced oscillations. Specialists have examined the stack foundations, welding in the

base sections, joints between sections and the electrical connections to the warning lights, none of which show any evidence that the integrity of the structure has been compromised. VINCI has confirmed that work has recommenced on site but not on the stack erection. We have asked for a formal report on the incident including designs and further details on the stack erection procedures which will include Risk Assessment Method Statements together with details of any temporary works to further stabilise the structure. All this needs to take place before any erection work on the stacks is restarted. The dilemma we have is that the last top sections include the stabilisers (oscillations dampers) needed to permanently fix the issue. When they are installed we will have a fully stable configuration. The current temporary solution, while safe, is not the best in terms of oscillations. Nevertheless we will complete our investigation, hopefully the calm conditions will continue so we can complete the works. Health and safety on the site has the highest priority, this will not be compromised. We expect to have the final report within a few days, as soon as we do I will get back to you.

Dear John

An update. Over the last 2 days we have had extensive, detailed design reviews and inspections relating to the stacks. The firm belief is that the oscillations were indeed caused by low wind speeds that matched the natural frequency of the stack. There is no permanent damage to the foundations and the stacks; the integrity of the entire structure has not been affected.

As mentioned in my previous mail, the top sections, yet to be mounted, include oscillation dampers to mitigate the effect of wind speeds. The consensus among the specialists is that the safest, prudent solution is to mount the remaining sections. So, weather permitting, as soon as the relevant Risk Assessment Method Statements are in place, we intend instructing VINCI to proceed with the final erection. I will keep you informed on progress.

Hope this is helpful
Best wishes
John

John Pollard

Leader Cornwall Council

Hayle North ED

The following day (Wednesday), before David Buckles emails had been received, after an Extraordinary Cabinet Meeting Cllr Pollard and I sat down in County Hall and discussed the grave concerns of the residents in the locality and the lack of confidence in the assurances being given so far about the suitability of the stacks and their construction.

I have been in conversation with Cllr Cole and he has expressed his support (red below) of my emails explaining the public concern and requests to SITA in an email from Cllr Cole to David Buckle and others.

From: Dick Cole – Cornwall Council
Date: 03/02/2015 - 18:33 (GMTST)
To: Michael Dobson – SITA, David Buckle - SITA
Cc: Fred Greenslade – Cornwall Council
Subject : Temporary Bracing and the Stack

May I say that I fully agree with the sentiments of Cllr Greenslade. Yesterday, I also viewed the moving chimney which cannot be dismissed as a routine matter. He is right to demand an assessment of the structural issues, especially before any further height is added to the chimney.

I look forward to further updates,

Cllr Dick Cole
St Enoder Diivision

Last night (Thursday) my phone was in meltdown and also residents knocking on the door, and rightly so, expressing their grave concerns that the stacks were on the move again.

I immediately phoned Mike Dobson at his home. Mike in turn contacted David Buckle to report the incidents.

After several phone calls late into the evening/night it was reported to me that two structural engineers were on site and were monitoring the situation. The metallic clanging noise has been attributed to the swaying stack hitting the pulley wheel and hook assembly on the end of the crane jib cables. I accept that it was not the two stacks hitting each other as previously as they are still clamped apart this morning at the top.

My immediate concern now is:

1. What damage will be caused if this continues?
2. Will we see written confirmation of statements from structural engineers who profess that these structures are safe?
3. Will someone from SITA or VINCI and Cornwall Council give a press release to residents as to the current situation?
We need to know!!
4. Will the metallic clanging be stopped immediately as it causes alarm to residents?
(Young children at Grose Meadows can hear staff talking in the day time so we can only imagine what this clanging must be like in the still of the night).
5. Why do the engineers still insist the the best way to stabilise this structure is to add a further 20mts to the height even with a stabilising mechanism?

6. What confidence do SITA and their contractors expect the residents to have in the stack structure when all of the above is happening with very low wind strength? (No gales to test the stacks yet)

I am not qualified to give a view as to the construction of the stacks but as a resident and Cornwall Councillor I am extremely concerned with regard to the suitability and longevity of these stacks.

We need positive immediate action and written confirmation that this construction will be closely scrutinised as to it being fit for purpose and future stability.

The good will toward this construction site that was already thin on the ground is melting away faster than the snow.

I give you the residents my assurance that I am pressing for action with Cllr Cole and we will not relent in expressing your concerns.

Kind Regards
Fred Greenslade
Chair Central Planning Committee
Cornwall Councillor St Dennis and Nanpean Division

SITA reply to Councillor Greenslade, 6th. February 2015

----- Original Message -----

From: Michael Dobson – SITA

To: Fred Greenslade – Cornwall Council

Cc: Wendy Yelland – St.Dennis Parish Council, Verna Hedley – St.Stephen in Brannel Council, David Buckle – SITA, Pat Blanchard, John Pollard – Cornwall Council, Eddy Martin – Cornwall Council, Dick Cole – Cornwall Council,

Sent: Friday, February 06, 2015 8:05 PM

Subject: Re: Incinerator Stacks

Dear Councillor Greenslade,

Thank you for your email, I trust that the answers to your questions below will go some way to reassuring you that we are acting in a responsible manner and continuing to place the safety and well-being of local people and construction workers as a top priority.

What damage will be caused if this continues?

The stacks are designed to tolerate oscillations, there is no damage so far. The arrangement we have now, is a temporary one, it is therefore important to complete the erection of the final sections as these contain provisions to minimise oscillations, which are an integral part of the design.

Will we see written confirmation of statements from structural engineers who profess that these structures are safe?

We will submit a final report of the investigations which will summarise the cause, temporary solution, inspections, testing and method statements.

Will someone from SITA or VINCI and Cornwall Council give a press release to residents as to the current situation? We need to know!!

A statement was provided to the CERC Community Forum and to a number of local media outlets earlier today, explaining that the priority now is to proceed with the final erection.

We will shortly send an open 'dear resident' letter to the CERC Community Forum, which can then be circulated to your contacts and posted onto the Parish Council websites.

Will the metallic clanging be stopped immediately as it causes alarm to residents? (Young children at Grose Meadows can hear staff talking in the day time so we can only imagine what this clanging must be like in the still of the night).

The clanging was the temporary bracing moving with the stacks. This will cease when the bracing is removed and the final sections fitted.

Why do the engineers still insist the best way to stabilise this structure is to add a further 20mts to the height even with a stabilising mechanism?

The stack is not at its full height. The complete design provides for the stabilising mechanism to be in the final sections. The best way to stabilise it is to erect it as intended.

What confidence do SITA and their contractors expect the residents to have in the stack structure when all of the above is happening with very low wind strength? (No gales to test the stacks yet)

It is the low wind speeds which are causing this phenomenon, it is not expected to occur at high wind speeds. In any event, in their final form, the stacks are designed to withstand deflections caused by high (and low) wind speeds.

Kind regards

Mike

Mike Dobson
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