

Community Liaison Group

Minutes of the thirty-first meeting

Held 18 February 2020 6.30pm

At the Living Earth Organics Processing Plant, Metro Place, Bromley, CHRISTCHURCH

Present: Alex Jepsen (Chairperson), Daniel O'Carroll (Living Earth Ltd), Ross Trotter and Josh Wilson (Christchurch City Council), Derek Keenan (Estuary Association), Ruth Sarson (Environment Canterbury), Craig Downie (Eco Central), Alexandra Davids (Linwood-Central-Heathcote Community Board), Yani Johanson (Councillor), Catharina van Herwaarden (Bromley resident)

In Attendance: Annika Seddon (Minute Secretary)

1. Introductions and welcome

The Chair opened, welcomed the group as well as a new attendee; Catharina van Herwaarden (Bromley resident).

Apologies

Dennis Marriott (Living Earth Ltd), Lauren Hamilton and Emily McLaughlin (Environment Canterbury), Sally Buck (Linwood-Central-Heathcote Community Board) Nicole Marshall (Environment Canterbury Councillor) and Keith MacKay (Chairman of Dogwatch Trust).

2. Last meeting minutes

The group accepted the previous meeting minutes as a true and accurate record.

The Action Points from the 19 November 2019 meeting were reviewed and confirmed as complete.

3. Report from Living Earth and discussion

Daniel O'Carroll reviewed his report. Reported that dust results were within consent limits for reporting period. Noted that dust collector #7 was relocated in September 2019 to the Pump Station ~600m south of the site so that it would be located in the line of the in prevailing wind, and if high levels of dust were coming off the site, #7 would show that. Data (as per graph on Page 3 of the report) shows dust collector #7 is not being significantly impacted by the Living Earth site. He was pleased to see that the organic dust levels were down, indicating that the site is managing their activities well. However, total dust has increased, demonstrating that there are other offsite sources of dust.

Living Earth dust levels are 15 percent lower compared to the previous year and they hope to continue to improve these levels.

Daniel O'Carroll reminded the group that the Living Earth Open Day is scheduled for Saturday the 21st of March.

Yani Johansen asked if there were any days or periods during the last quarter where the complaints were worse than others and did any activities on site correspond to the odour complaint days.

Daniel O'Carroll recalled that January 2019 was the worst month for odour complaints and was uncertain if this year was better or worse. He noted that in January of this year there were 13 complaints over 4 days. He also noted that on Monday of this past week, there was a northerly wind when an odour complaint came in from the Bromley residential area. Five minutes later there was another odour complaint from Ruru Road. He was not aware of any activities that could have caused the odour at the time of the complaints and the plant could not be responsible for the odour in both areas given the wind direction at the time.

Catharina van Herwaarden described a new odour, like "dirty sand", that she had observed only in the last two days. She added that this new odour is not as unpleasant as the other odours that she observes more frequently.

Daniel O'Carroll and Catharina van Herwaarden agreed that it has not been determined that this new odour is coming from Living Earth Ltd.

Ross Trotter added that the presence of this new "dusty" odour confirms that there are numerous sources of odour in the area.

Yani Johansen had noticed that there were a few days over the last few months that a pungent "fishy" odour was prevalent in the Bromley area for extended periods of time.

Daniel O'Carroll stated that none of Living Earth's activities over the last two days or last three months has been out of the ordinary.

Ruth Sarson confirmed that it was her understanding that all odour complaints that come into the Christchurch City Council are transferred directly to ECan. She asked if the Council kept any data about those calls.

Josh Wilson noted that the Council do not keep a record of these calls at the present time.

Catharina van Herwaarden noted that frequency of the pungent odour has improved since Christmas 2019.

Daniel O'Carroll was pleased that the odour had improved but reiterated that Living Earth had not altered any of their activities since Christmas.

Action – Daniel O'Carroll to record any direct odour complaints in his future reports or redirect the customer to ECan.

Report from Environment Canterbury and discussion

Ruth Sarson reviewed the ECan odour report. There were 45 incidents, 18 of which occurred after hours and 9 were attended. At the present time, officers will only attend if there are three calls in the space of an hour. However, she announced that starting in the next few weeks, two full time staff will be dedicated to the Bromley area and will be carrying out reactive and proactive assessments.

Ruth Sarson added that to date, the ECan report has only included phone calls and emails to the odour incidence response line and not complaints from the “Smelt it” app. She asked if the group wished for those complaints to be noted in her report in future.

Action: Ruth Sarson to include information from the “Smelt it” app in future reports noting that this app covers all general odour complaints not just those specific to Living Earth.

Ruth Sarson explained that people using the app are asked to record the intensity of the odour (from weak to strong), their location and if they can determine the source.

Catharina van Herwaarden expressed her frustration when contacting ECan as she was not always aware of the wind direction and felt that wind direction has no bearing on the existence of the odour.

The group noted that since there has been increasing evidence that odours are coming from sites other than Living Earth that perhaps a separate meeting should be organised with other businesses in the wider Bromley area.

Ruth Sarson described ECan’s efforts to get other businesses involved noting that a pilot program is currently underway with Living Earth and the Council and they hope to extend this program to new businesses in the Bromley area in due course.

Yani Johansen asked how, out of all the complaints, not a single source of odour was identified by the officers. He requested that when an odour is substantiated that the magnitude of the odour be noted in the report.

Action: Ruth Sarson to add the magnitude of substantiated odours to future reports.

Ruth Sarson went into more detail about how the odour assessments are carried out. She explained that ECan uses the Ministry for the Environment guidelines which sets out a number of points that need to be assessed. The point of origin is determined by the customer’s location and then the assessment is carried out in the area around that point. The assessment takes approximately ten minutes and works best if the staff member can concentrate fully on their task.

Catharina van Herwaarden felt that ten minutes is insufficient time as the odours can come and go quickly.

Ruth Sarson replied that the new dedicated staff members may have fewer restrictions on their time and could perhaps stay a bit longer.

Daniel O’Carroll offered to show the new staff around the Living Earth site when they start.

Daniel O’Carroll asked Ruth Sarson if Bromley Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act (LGOIMA) requests will be made available on the ECan website, as they have been in the past.

Ruth confirmed that the current LGOIMA requests are Bromley wide.

Yani Johansen asked how many complaints have been lodged with the new app, how many people use it and if Ecan staff attend the odour complaints lodged by the app?

Ruth Sarson replied that currently the app is still in its pilot phase so there are only 13 users. Phone calls are still the primary source of complaints, but the app complaints aid in the decision of whether or not to attend a site. When the pilot phase is completed, ECan will decide if the app can be the main way that people can report odours.

4. Other business relevant to meeting purpose

The group discussed attendance issues by the community at future meetings.

5. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 19th of May at 6.30pm at Metro Place

The meeting concluded at 7.14pm