

# Amenity issues briefing – June 2024

## Introduction

The Environment Agency and Warwick District Council (WDC) have been working in partnership to investigate reports of flies and odour in the Heathcote and Whitnash area.

A number of these reports have named Plasgran Limited (also known as Berry Circular Polymers) as the source.

## WDC - latest update

### Reports received

Since the last briefing note, and up to 28 June, WDC has received 83 reports of odour. Complaints have referred to a bin / rotting food type smell, chemical odour, a smell of sewage or rotten egg and on a number of occasions the nature of the odour was not specified. WDC has also received 38 reports of flies and 7 of noise.

### What action has WDC taken?

Warwick District Council has continued to log complaints received and follow up on those where more information is required. Callers have been provided with advice and asked to get back in touch when the issues are occurring. We can't stress enough how important it is to contact us when the odour or noise is at its worst, as officers need to witness the problem and visit at the same time when people are most inconvenienced.

There has been a notable increase in reports during the second half of June which has coincided with a period of warmer weather. In response a number of visits have been carried out including the following:

On 18 June an officer visited the area twice in response to complaints including a report of an unspecified odour alleged to be emanating from the Plasgran Limited (PL) site. At the first visit no odour was noted. During the second a faint bin type odour was detected intermittently as the officer surveyed the area. The odour was not detectable in Ashbourne Drive and could not be positively linked to the PL site at the time of the visit.

On 21 June a visit was made in response to complaints of a sewage type odour. The described odour was witnessed and found to be very localised, detectable only at the frontages of several properties on Tachbrook Road. The same odour was not noticeable at Ashbourne Drive, or the boundary of the PL site and it was noted that PL were unlikely to be the source on this occasion.

On 24 June a proactive visit was carried out as a follow up to the visit the previous Friday and further reports of odour over the weekend. While carrying out a walkover of the area an eggy/bin type smell was detected on the commercial side of Tachbrook Road and at the Ashbourne Road boundary of the PL site, the same odour was not noticeable at the frontage of the residential properties on Tachbrook Road or in the wider area at the time of the visit.

During the evening of 24 June and into 25 June WDC received 15+ reports of odour, described as a sewage / blocked drain / rotten egg / bin smell. Reports of increased fly numbers were also received. A visit was carried out on the morning of 25 June, the strong odour described wasn't detectable during a walkover of the Tachbrook Road /

Montgomery Road / Ashbourne Drive area. A faint, intermittent bin-type smell was noted in Ashbourne Drive but not apparent at the other locations visited. Flies were also observed at a property during this visit and details of type and number recorded.

During the evening of 27 June and into 28 June WDC received approximately 20 reports of odour, described by the majority of complainants as a sewage, rotten egg or sulphurous odour. Officers visited on 28 June and noted a strong sewage type odour in Tachbrook Road. Officers considered the odour was likely to be result of a drainage issue and no link was made with the PL site, the matter has been referred to Severn Trent who is currently investigating.

Since the last briefing note Warwick District Council officers have also carried out a further visit to the PL site. This was on the 30 May, where current processes and operational procedures were discussed (and demonstrated), as well as the pest-control measures, and discussions regarding additional steps that are currently being put in place were held.

Following observations made by the Environment Agency on 26 June, where it was recorded that several residents had left food waste caddies on the road with open lids and food or residue left inside, where there was also evidence of fly breeding (maggots). Please ensure your food waste bins are kept clean and are not left where they can cause problems. Please visit our website for some helpful tips on using your waste food caddy:

[https://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/info/20470/recycling/1028/food\\_waste](https://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/info/20470/recycling/1028/food_waste)

## Environment Agency - latest update

The Environment Agency conducted an unannounced site inspection of Plasgran Limited (PL) on 18 June 2024. The permit holder has 28 days from the receipt of our Compliance Assessment Report (CAR), in which they can challenge any findings within the report. As this information falls within the 28-day challenge period, we will include it in next month's briefing note.

Regarding findings we detailed in last month's briefing, relating to a site inspection of Fortress Recycling and Resource Management Limited on 8 May 2024, actions were given to the operator to manage and operate activities in accordance with their written management system, which incorporates the pest management plan, and to work in accordance with their fire prevention plan. We have also provided relevant advice and guidance to the operator.

### Reports received

Between 22 May 2024 and 28 June 2024, the Environment Agency received 22 odour reports and 22 fly reports. We also received one complaint of noise.

### Flies

Fly reports increased towards the end of June 2024.

In response to the recent complaints received by the Environment Agency from residents, we visited the area on Wednesday 26 June 2024 between 13.00 and 14:30. Our officers observed that a recent food waste collection had taken place from properties along Tachbrook Road. Officers walked along the road from the Windmill Inn southerly towards the junction with Heathcote Lane. Officers saw that most of the bins along the pavement had been left with their lids open. Inside some of the bins officers saw evidence of maggots, flies and remnants of food and liquor from degrading food. One officer also

detected a smell associated with rotting food. All findings have been shared WDC for further investigation.

The Environment Agency plans to carry out fly monitoring within homes of consenting residents. The purpose of the monitoring is to help us gather data on the species and fly activity in the local area.

There was an increase in flies recorded by PL during the week commencing 10 June 2024 following a 2-week reduction in numbers. The most recent data recorded from week commencing 17 June shows that the number of flies on site is decreasing. We continue to work with the operator to reduce fly numbers and identify any changes in operations that may contribute to fluctuating numbers on site. Fly activity will fluctuate depending on weather conditions.

### **Odour**

Odour reports increased towards the end of June 2024.

As detailed above when investigating reports received on 26 June 2024 on Tachbrook road, a rotten food odour was detected surrounding contaminated food waste bins. Findings have been forwarded to WDC for further investigation.

We received an increase in reports of a sewage and human excrement odour in the area. This odour was not detected on subsequent monitoring visits to the PL site boundary. We have contacted Severn Trent who confirmed it has received reports from residents and local businesses and is investigating potential incidents in the area. We encourage you to report any odour of this nature to Severn Trent directly on its reporting phone number 0345 603 8598 to support its ongoing investigation.

### **Next steps**

**WDC** will continue to respond to complaints received concerning noise or odour and will continue to work with and support the Environment Agency with its ongoing investigations.

As reports of flies are increasing, WDC will log all complaints, visit properties if practical to do so, and gather as much information as possible, including fly type and numbers, and this will be shared with the Environment Agency.

Flies in any location are common this time of year so please only report flies if they are in high numbers, advising us of how many flies per room and a brief description of them (e.g. common fly, blue bottle etc).

We will try to contact as many people as we can back, however if there are multiple complaints received from a specific area, we may need to focus our resources on those with the biggest problem.

We will remain in regular contact with Severn Trent regarding its investigation of the suspected drainage issue in the Tachbrook Road area and provide an update when this is available.

**The Environment Agency** will continue to regulate permitted and exempt sites in the area, to ensure operators are taking appropriate measures to control odour and flies. We will continue to investigate all reports, and work with and support WDC with its investigations.

## Incident reporting

WDC is keen to identify any possible fly sources and understand more about any issues relating to odour or noise in the area. If you have any information, please contact WDC via its website <https://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/info/20501/pollution> or by emailing [Pollution@warwickdc.gov.uk](mailto:Pollution@warwickdc.gov.uk).

You can report any fly issues, odour, or noise linked to Environment Agency permitted sites to the 24-hour Environment Agency incident hotline on **0800 80 70 60**. We will share incident report details with WDC to enable us to respond in the most effective manner.

We encourage you to report any odour or flies to us as soon as practically possible. Please provide as much detail as possible for example, the approximate number of flies that are impacting you and any photographs.

## Other sources of information

You can find more information about the action taken to date by the Environment Agency and WDC here: <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/west-midlands/leamington-spa-fly-issues/>

Paper copies of the updates are available to view in the following local buildings. Please do not remove these paper copies.

- Whitnash Civic Centre, Acre Close, Whitnash
- Heathcote Community Centre, Cressida Close, Heathcote
- Brunswick Hub, Shrubland Street, Leamington Spa
- The Sydney Centre, Cottage Square, Sydenham.