

Stretton on Dunsmore Parish Council  
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Email: [strettonondunsmoreclerk@gmail.com](mailto:strettonondunsmoreclerk@gmail.com)

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Ms Stephanie Cawley,  
Severn Trent,  
PO Box 407,  
Darlington,  
DL1 9WD

Dear Ms Cawley,

**RE: The watercourse between Stretton on Dunsmore and Princethorpe Villages**

**Our ref: COM-238014-Q8H6Y1**

Thank you for your recent email response received on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024 and apologies for the delay in getting back to you.

Please excuse the unusual format to this letter; the questions the Parish Council posed to you in its letter dated 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024 are marked in black, your responses are in blue and the Parish Council's further queries are coloured in red.

**1. You acknowledge that the number of spills in times of rainfall – ‘incidents’ – exceeds the current expected level. What is the ‘current expected level’? To date, by how much is that number exceeded?**

We have consent from the Environment Agency which allows the sewage pumping station (SPS) to spill to the watercourse when the agreed pumping rate is exceeded by the incoming flows. This could happen sporadically throughout the year or not at all, depending on storm events experienced being experienced in the area.

We are well aware that Severn Trent have permission to spill sewage during periods of excess flow. We are also aware, from your own figures, that, as reported in the press<sup>1</sup>, one of the worst local examples of such spillage is into Princethorpe Brook under Permit number: S/12/07742/O. The pumping station reported a sewer storm overflow of raw effluent 85 times during 2022. This was a total of 1164.29 hours, over 49 days,<sup>2</sup> spilling into the Princethorpe Brook. Bearing in mind that 2022 was a very hot summer with a near drought,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://kenilworth.nub.news/news/local-news/sewage-dumping-in-local-rivers-falls-by-40-but-levels-remain-high-198740>

<sup>2</sup> Source The Environment Agency

this is very worrying. Severn Trent themselves stated that this level of spillage exceeded the “expected level”.

We asked, and ask once more, what is the expected level?

**2. We understand that you have a legal obligation to install ‘event duration monitoring’ by the 31 December 2023. Has that been installed? This requires water companies to monitor and maintain records on such spills, but we would like to know when Severn Trent started to keep such records on the performance of the pumping station? Since the flooding of the brook has been a long-standing issue, please make such records for the last 5 years available to the Council.**

To access these records, you would need to make an ‘Environmental Information Request’. More information on EIR’s can be found on our website- <https://www.stwater.co.uk/about-us/environment/environmental-information-regulations/>

These are fairly simple questions that we are asking so we feel that you should be able to give us clear and straight answers without directing us elsewhere. We repeat our queries -

Has event duration monitoring been installed? If so, when? Since when were records kept?

You must be aware that since we started corresponding with you there was a serious flooding event on 2 January 2024 which resulted in the school, the pub and 4 houses being inundated and many others coming extremely close. The matter of drains, their capacity, the brook and the management thereof is very much front of mind in our community and we are looking to Severn Trent to be as open and honest as possible about how they plan to redress what has been an unacceptable situation for some years.

**3. How many tankers were deployed in 2023? On how many occasions?**

We’ve had to implement tankers to the site on several occasions during rainfall. These have been deployed to reduce the impact to the environment whilst we await the capital scheme to fully resolve the issue. Tankers have been deployed on 18 occasions to Stretton-On-Dunsmore SPS, with up to 4 tankers being deployed at any one time. The tankers have had to be on site continuously for several days during periods of prolonged heavy rainfall.

This is not completely clear; you say you have employed tankers on 18 occasions; does that mean 18 x 4 tankers so the answer to the question is actually 72?

**4. You say work to resolve the issue is due to commence in Spring 2024. While that is encouraging, please provide the Council with the date of commencement as soon as it is known, such details of the work as you are prepared to share with the Council and the anticipated duration of the work.**

The work will impact residents in and around the area. When this occurs, we would undertake a consultation process with our customers to ensure they are aware of any impact of the works. We will of course keep you updated as and when we are able.

It is encouraging that Severn Trent have agreed to keep the Parish Council and residents up to date. However, given that you expect to commence this work 'in the spring', and it is now February, you surely have a date scheduled. Please let us know what it is.

We have recently been advised<sup>3</sup> that there is planned work to lay an additional larger sewer pipe from where the existing pipe changes size just north of Freeboard Lane, alongside that which runs across the top of the village passing across:

- The allotments
- Plott Lane
- The Plott
- Church Farm
- Church Hill
- Cutthroat Lane

And thence to the pumping station. In fact, this work appears to have already commenced so it is disappointing that far from letting us know you have gone ahead without any notice to us.

In terms of this work, since it runs from Freeboard Lane and across the top of the village it is unlikely that it carries much, if any, effluent from Stretton on Dunsmore which leads us to conclude that the pumping station processes foul water from other communities.

The map provided with the letter from Emily Taylor does not actually show the planned route, merely part of the area that might be affected. It does not even show the existing pipe.

Can you provide us with a map showing the sewage pipes and whence they come from before they come into our village and go onto the pumping station? Also, the planned additions to the system.

That said, enabling greater flow of sewage down to the pumping station is not, we assume, going to help with the release of sewage into the brook, in fact it would be likely to make it worse.

So, is this the first phase of planned works to the pumping station and what else is proposed and when?

**5. The Rugby Local Plan, which was agreed 5 years ago, provides for the building of nearly 100 additional properties in Stretton on Dunsmore. Outline planning permission is now in place for 2 developments in our village. We are advised that Severn Trent were approached for comment and did not raise any issues. The Council is concerned that if the existing system is unable to cope with the current level of effluent from the village a further 100 homes is likely to cause even more problems. Please confirm that any planned works will take into account the proposed expansion to the village.**

When a new application is made for development our Asset Protection Team will assess the impact this may have on the existing sewerage network. This has been completed taking account of existing flows into the network and the additional load from any new

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<sup>3</sup> A letter from Emily Taylor dated 24 January 2024 to Mrs Veronica Ward

development. Any new development will only discharge foul water to the system, which in a pumped system such as Stretton should be controlled by the pumping rate. In addition, we're undertaking infiltration surveys to understand any ingress of water from other sources which will be removed if found. This will help with any additional flows into the pump station.

Whilst this is helpful to understand your process can you please confirm that the planned works will be taking into account the new developments scheduled for this village?

**6. The tankers have caused extensive damage to the approach track – from the junction of Fineacre Lane and Church Hill - and Cutthroat Lane, the road to the pumping station, such that parts are dangerous for walkers. I would remind you that Cutthroat Lane, being the track from Fineacre Lane to the first gate and just beyond, is a Public Right of Way and should be maintained in a condition suitable for its purpose. Please confirm that any remedial work will include satisfactory repairs to the track and road. That should also include the standing area outside the station – across which a Right of Way exists.**

I believe work to repair the track may already have taken place. If not then I can assure you that this is imminent. We will of course make good any areas that are disturbed during construction of the scheme.

We are pleased to see that work has commenced on repairing Cutthroat Lane and we look forward to it once more being a useable thoroughfare for our community. We are slightly concerned that when the new pipeline goes down there it will be damaged once more so can you please confirm that it will be reinstated once again?

With regards



Mrs Helen Stewart  
Clerk to Stretton on Dunsmore Parish Council

Cc Jeremy Wright MP  
Cc Princethorpe Parish Council  
Cc Rugby Borough Council  
Cc OFWAT  
Cc Warwickshire County Council