

Bromley Community Liaison Group

Minutes

18th May 2021, 6:30pm

Venue: Environment Canterbury, Tuam Street office

Note: This meeting was recorded via Teams, however due to technical difficulties the whole meeting was not efficiently recorded and these minutes have been based upon and written notes at the time of the meeting.

Facilitator: Ian Whitehouse (Whit)

Presenters: Christchurch City Council (CCC) – Josh Wilson and Ross Trotter
Environment Canterbury (ECan) – Ruth Sarson and Marty Mortiaux
Living Earth - Daniel O'Carroll

Minutes: Kimberley Kovacs-Wilks (ECan)

Present: Action – Collect details of who is present at the beginning of the next meeting

Introductions and Welcome

- The facilitator welcomed everyone and reminded the group to remain respectful, ensuring that only one person speaking is at a time.
 - Permission for recording of the meeting was then confirmed with all those in attendance.
 - The facilitator outlined that the first part of the meeting would be focused on presenting the ECan and CCC reports.
 - Bruce King requested that ECan, CCC and the respective Councillors leave the room for ten minutes so that the community could discuss a plan of action and behaviour for the meeting ahead.
 - Recording stopped and all staff left the room.
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Purpose and structure of Meeting

- The community gave approval for the meeting and recording to continue.
- The facilitator re-outlined that the purpose of the meeting is to present the CCC and ECan reports, discuss odour and dust issues, and provide the community an opportunity to ask questions.
- **Community Question:** Bruce King asked to start the meeting with a discussion of the previous minutes and the information missing from them.
Answer from ECan: Ruth Sarson said that the notes provided to all those on the mailing list are not formal minutes, but a summary of keys points and questions covered in the meeting as they do not note who was in attendance or the actions.

Community Response: Bruce King and Mike Williams said that they would like formal minutes to be taken, outlining who had spoken, their questions, answers and actions, as not all information was being included through the informal note process.

Action: *Formal minutes to be taken at CLG meetings moving forward.*

CCC Question: Ross Trotter asked if the community would like to return to having a formal process and chair as well?

Community Answer: Bruce King said that they will trial the formal minute taking first and make a decision from there. He then raised his concerns regarding the unfair treatment of community members during the meetings. Mike Williams continued and stated that the community had agreed to ensure that everyone conducts themselves to a better standard.

Apologies

- Yani Johanson, Janet Stokes and Kevin Stokes.

Minutes from the previous meeting

- The facilitator asked what issues the community would like to raise, regarding previous sessions minutes.
- **Community Comment:** Bruce King noted that he had previously raised issues regarding the Melbourne plant. The community was informed that the improvements to Living Earth were modelled off the Melbourne plant and they are concerned that it will not fix the odour issue as Melbourne also receives odour complaints. Therefore, how can they believe that these improvements won't still cause odour in the Bromley area.
- **Community Comment:** Mike Williams requested that the minutes of this meeting be provided within ten days before noting that the community has concerns about the project completion date of February 2022. Mike Williams requested that more information is provided detailing how works will be completed within this timeframe, and further details about what will happen to mitigate odour if it is not achieved.

Note: *Living Earth and CCC to provide further information regarding the timeframe of works as part of the transitional plan as it comes available.*

- **Community Comment:** Bruce King noted that when the community asks questions, they would like to see the answers when the minutes come out when practicable, so that they are available for the community to review.
- The facilitator confirmed that there were no further issues with the previous minutes before moving on.

Presentation and discussion of report from Environment Canterbury

Environment Canterbury Report:

- Ruth Sarson introduced the ECan report for the period of February to April 2021. She first outlined that the reports from that point forward will have a new geographical boundary, to clarify the data for reporting purposes and focus it on the Bromley area.
- During the reporting period, a total of 138 incidents were logged with ECan, with a large proportion of these being reported through Smelt It. Of these incidents, there were 44 where the customer specifically referenced Living Earth. 36 assessments were carried out by warranted officers during this time, and odours were confirmed from Living Earth 34 times.
- A total of 16 Notices of Non-Compliance and 4 Infringement notices were issued to Living Earth Limited in February, and 9 Notices of Non-Compliance issued in March and April.
- Ruth Sarson noted that over the period ECan received two reports of dust, which related to dust from KBs Contracting and Living Earth. While these reports were not substantiated, in April ECan proactively substantiated dust from KBs Contracting on Maces Road. Since this time, ECan has received their Dust Management Plan and will continue to work with KBs to address the dust.
- Ruth Sarson encouraged the community to report dust if it is observed from any sites.

Environment Canterbury report discussion:

- **Community Question:** The community asked what they should be using to report odour.
Answer from ECan: Ruth Sarson confirmed that they should continue to use Smelt It.
- **Community Question:** Mike Williams asked Ruth Sarson if she was concerned with the number of reports being received.
Answer from ECan: Ruth Sarson responded that there has been a sharp decrease in Smelt It submissions over the last few months. However, this does not change our officers' responses; regardless of whether it is one or multiple Smelt Its they will respond.
Community Question: Mike Williams asked what the short-term plan is to reduce odour.
Answer from CCC: Ross Trotter responded that this is covered as part of the transitional plan, and will be discussed further.

Presentation and discussion of report from Christchurch City Council

Christchurch City Council and Living Earth report:

- Daniel O'Carroll presented the Living Earth report.
- Daniel O'Carroll reported that they have two dust monitors off site which measure dust levels up and down wind of the Living Earth property boundary. Both of these monitors measure similar levels of dust, indicating that the compost is not releasing dust beyond the property boundary.
- Daniel O'Carroll reported that they received one high dust reading in February. They had an external scientist look at the data as well however, they were not able to be related it back to any particular activities or events. Since the high reading, the values have returned back to normal.

- Additional actions taking place include the replanting of a section of the property boundary in follow up from a previous Compliance Monitoring Report.
- The report also covers methods to mitigate odour and dust, which will be managed through the redevelopment of the site.
- Through the transitional period, Living Earth is working to manage odour and dust discharges from the site, and keeping the community informed over this time. Steps to over this transitional period will include:
 - Reducing the volume of mature compost stored on site, some of which is being used at other CCC facilities. Between now and August, 8,500 tonnes of compost should be removed, and then an additional 8,500 tonnes by November-December. Leaving them with only the first few weeks of mature compost on site.
 - Replacing the bark in the biofilter to improve air flow through the tunnels, which also improves the compost stability.
 - Planting a vegetative buffer at the southern end of the site.
 - Considering the use of a probiotic in the compost to improve the rate of processing and increase product stability.

Christchurch City Council report discussion:

- **Question from the Community:** Mike Williams asked how they are managing the removal of compost from the site and ensuring appropriate wetting measures so as not to produce dust and odour.
Answer from Living Earth: Daniel O'Carroll responded and said that they are using the same measures as any other day. Overall, the volume of compost leaving the site is no greater than the largest volume transported on their busiest days or month. As part of their regular measures, they use misters, water cannons, speed limits, and regular sweeping and cleaning to manage possible discharges as the result of their activities. As per their consent, they have restrictions around their operations based on wind speed and direction. As a result, they do not foresee a change in dust or odour profile from the site.
- **Question from the Community:** Mike Williams asked why they are still experiencing odour.
Answer from Living Earth: Daniel O'Carroll responded saying he is unsure why the community is still experiencing odour, some days there are no complaints and others there are many more.
- **Question from the Community:** Vicky Walker asked if Living Earth was receiving any more animal waste.
Answer from Living Earth: Daniel O'Carroll responded that pre-consumer food waste stopped being received in December 2020 and the only compost which may contain these materials will be mature compost, which he is confident will not smell.
- **Question from the Community:** Mike Williams requested that Daniel O'Carroll explain the biofilter in layman's terms.

Answer from Living Earth: Daniel O'Carroll said that the biofilter works to remove odour through biological processes, so microbes grow on the bark material and essentially scrub odour from the air being passed through the filter from the tunnels. Over time, the media breaks down and reduces pore space, decreasing the effectiveness of the process. Therefore, the new media should more efficiently remove odour.

Question from the Community: Mike Williams asked for timeframes.

Answer from Living Earth: Daniel O'Carroll said it should be complete in the first week of June.

Question from the Community: Mike Williams asked, so does this mean we should be able to walk past the biofilter without throwing up? As it seems to them that the biofilter is the biggest source of odour.

Answer from Living Earth: Daniel O'Carroll responded that he was not aware of their reactions to it in the past, however they are subjective. The community is welcome to come through the site again once the improvements have been made.

Comment from ECan: Councillor Nicole Marshall clarified that she did not throw up during her previous visit.

- **Question from the Community:** Geoffery King asked if he could now ask some questions, stating that there are discrepancies between the CCC and Living Earth Reports, with the original report stating that the upgrades to the plant will not eliminate the odours completely, however the most recent Living Earth Report states that the odour will be gone. What will happen regarding the odour?

Answer from CCC: Councillor Pauline Cotter responded that as previously noted, Helen Beaumont referred to it as "not all odour in Bromley was be removed with the improvements."

Comment from Community: Geoffrey clarified that Helen Beaumont was only referring to Living Earth.

Comment from Living Earth: Daniel O'Carroll responded that he had interpreted it to mean that not all odours from the whole of Bromley would be fixed. However, these improvements are designed to eliminate odour from the organics processing plant and Daniel is confident that the changes will eliminate the odour and dust issues.

Action: *Want a formal response from Helen Beaumont regarding what she referred to when she said that "not all odour would be removed with the improvements to Living Earth"*

- **Question from community:** Geoffrey King continued, stating that commercial food waste has stopped being accepted by Living Earth and asked what else does CCC think is contributing to the odour?

Answer from CCC: Ross Trotter responded that they have taken feedback from the community regarding what they thought the issue was, concluding that the commercial waste and biofilter are the primary odour concerns for them. This was also considered against ECan's information which noted that the windrows were also contributing. As part of the transitional plan, Living Earth have worked to resolve these issues through eliminating commercial waste from the processing, changing the media in the biofilter and by significantly reducing the volume of compost on site over the upcoming months.

Question from community: Geoffery King asked, what foods do CCC and Living Earth think smells?

Answer from Living Earth: Daniel O'Carroll answered that pre-consumer food waste, such as meat, fats and other food can cause a lot of various odours during their breakdown process.

- **Community Question:** Bruce King and Carol Anderson asked if they still accepted abattoir or chicken waste, and if they will return to accepting it once the upgrades are complete?

Answer from Living Earth and CCC: Daniel O'Carroll answered that they no longer accept either of these waste materials, but it is likely that they will return to accepting it once complete. Councillor Cotter added that Helen Beaumont had not thought that the removal of commercial waste would make a difference in the odour profile of Living Earth, however they removed it from the process based on the communities concerns.

ACTION: *Helen Beaumont to comment on the impact of commercial food waste on odour.*

- **Community Question:** Bruce King asked that they return to the topic of removing excess compost from the site. He was concerned that the report said excess compost would be removed starting 10th of May.

Answer from Living Earth: Daniel O'Carroll responded that on site processes will not change and that they are physically unable to transport any additional compost than what they normally can on busy months. Ross Trotter further clarified that there will not be any more compost being transported from the site than what would be transported in their peak sales months.

- **Community Question:** Mike Williams asked what the difference between a big and a small month is?

Answer from Living Earth: Daniel O'Carroll responded that it is a few thousand versus a thousand tonnes per month, so to remove additional compost from the site they are having more peak months. That is, they are removing high volumes of compost on a regular basis, so that by spring there should be 60% less compost present on site.

- **Community Question:** Geoffery King asked how the planting at the southern end of the site, as stipulated in the CCC report, will improve the odour issue? And he asked why the tree break does not help stop the odour from travelling to the Caltex Dyers Road or the length of the road itself?

Answer from Living Earth: Daniel O'Carroll said that a vegetative buffer will function as a wind break and may help stop the odour from travelling. He also said that for all they know, the odour could be worse if the trees weren't in place by Caltex now. These new plantings will be located near Charlesworth Reserve.

- **Community Comment:** Mike Williams said that he would like to add a forward-looking action. The community believes that a significant contributing factor to the odour is food in the kerbside green bins, and he would like a scientific investigation addressing:
 - How the food waste is contributing to the overall odour issues
 - The practicality of food waste into the red kerbside bins over the short term

- How the odour may change if the food waste is put in the red bins and transported to Kate Valley.

Vicky Walker added that they want to stop meat and other food waste being put in the green bins.

Question from ECan: Councillor Nicole Marshall asked if they would like this to be a literature review or if they would like CCC to conduct an independent trial and investigation?

Answer from Community: Mike responded that a literature review would suffice at this stage. We would like to know you are considering all options, and would appreciate if in the interim, until works are complete, that the food waste going to red bins be considered as an option to manage the odour issues.

Answer from CCC: Councillor James Daniels agreed that removing food waste from the green bins as a temporary measure is worth considering. Councillor Cotter added that the costs of transporting the waste to Kate Valley versus Living Earth is very high and it is just moving the odour issue to a new place.

Action: *CCC to investigate the practicality of removing food waste from the organic kerbside bins.*

- **Community Question:** Bruce King said he had another question for Daniel O'Carroll regarding the odour on the 4/5th of May 2021, and he wanted to know the reason behind the strong odour?

Answer from Living Earth: Daniel O'Carroll responded saying he noted that they had received over 40 smelt its on that day, however he has no explanation for the odour. Nothing different was occurring on site, and it was the same compost as usual on site.

- **Community Question:** Bruce asked why they do not have plume data?

Answer from CCC: Josh Wilson responded that the plumes were one of the options they had to decide if they wanted from the software. They have e-noses, which are electronic noses, on site which pick up different compounds in the air and model the odour. Living Earth use this information for monitoring purposes, however the plumes are not very effective in modelling and determining where the odour may go, so were not included as part of the software package.

Community Question Geoffrey King asked why they do not use it anymore?

Answer from Living Earth: Daniel O'Carroll answered saying that they no longer have access to that technology and that it does not add any valuable data to their monitoring.

- The facilitator noted that the meeting does not have much time left and encouraged that any further questions be asked.
- Ruth Sarson noted that other businesses within Bromley, and the Canterbury District Health Board, have been asked to attend, however no one was available. A copy of the CDHBs report has been made available, and Ruth Sarson encouraged that everyone emails any questions they have through to her, so she can pass them on to the CDHB and have them answered directly by them.
- Josh Wilson then noted that the CDHB report claims that all composting facilities are required to meet a composting New Zealand Standard. However, this Standard is not mandatory but voluntary, and Living Earth is one of the few facilities which meet it.

Living Earth is also one of the few composting facilities which regularly test for legionnaires.

Action: Ruth Sarson please email the CDHB report to the community members.

Action: Community to email Ruth Sarson with any further questions relating to the report for CDHB response.

- The facilitator asked if there were any further questions regarding dust and odour in Bromley.
- Councillor Marshall said her thanks to CCC regarding their report and transitional plan actions.
- **Community Question:** Margaret asked if there was any update on the timeline regarding the plant upgrades?
- **Answer from CCC:** Josh Wilson answered and said that the tender was sent out to the market, and they have received the expressions of interest. The full tender was then sent out to a shortlisted list of contractors. The tender had to be out for 8 weeks, and it was halfway through this period. They should have a significant update for the next CLG meeting regarding the successful tenderer and further information on the project.
Community Response: Margaret said that they are concerned about the timeline as it is already June.
CCC Response: Josh Wilson said that they will have the contractor secured by July, which is still within their timeline, and then they will hopefully be able to provide the construction timeframe as well.
- **Community comment:** Vicky Walker said that they are happy that they feel they are being heard, and that the removal of food waste from organic bins is being considered.
CCC Response: Councillor Daniels reiterated that it would be costly to remove the food waste from organic bins, however it is still important to consider over this period.
- **Community Question:** Vicky Walker and Geoffrey King asked if there was still the option to move the plant, as it is the best option for the community.
Answer from CCC: Councillor Daniels noted that it is too late as the tender is out.
Community comment: Mike Williams quoted a sentence from the CCC report “We are asking the suppliers to get to the lowest possible odour level by the January 2022 date, although the entirety of the upgrade may not be complete by this time. We want to ensure everything possible is done by this time.” Mike noted that he thinks this is a very simple statement, and that if removing the food waste from the organic bins will fix the odour then it should be implemented.
CCC Response: Councillor Daniels and Ross Trotter noted their concerns over the behaviour changes required to for this, especially in light of what happened over Covid, which is having long term ramifications with contamination to the recycling bins. Daniel O’Carroll noted that in his unbiased opinion, every resident in Christchurch would not change their behaviours as required to first stop putting food waste in the organic bins and then start again once the plant is complete.

- Ruth Sarson noted that we have ran out of time.
- Josh Wilson confirmed that everyone was okay with a similar sort of set up for next time as well.

- **Community Question:** Bruce King requested that the community be provided 15 minutes before the start of the next meeting to have a pre-meeting.
- The community will meet 15 minutes prior to the start of the CLG to prepare.
- Recording stopped.

The meeting concluded.