

AGENDA
Meeting to discuss Problems with Thames Water
Thursday 8th September commencing 4.30pm
Northend Village Hall

1. Introduction from the Chairman – Cllr Nuttgens
2. Update from Councillor Sants on Turville Parish Council actions to date
3. Opportunity from residents to ask questions and express views on next steps
4. Agreement on next steps including proposal to form an Action Group
5. Any Other Relevant Business

Background to Turville Parish Council engagement on issue of Northend Water Supply

There have been periodic water supply interruptions in Northend for a significant number of houses (Approx 30) since 2018.

The most recent problems commenced around 11 July and lasted through to around 26 July.

The issue is that whilst Thames Water (TW) have responded to the interruptions with tankers and bottled water they do not yet appear to have identified the causes and in consequence do not have a long term plan to fix the issues.

Actions by Turville Parish Council (TPC) to date,

1. TPC via the clerk, reported the issue to TW and received a response which was circulated via the village WhatsApp.
2. Councillor Sants contacted the water regulator Ofwat and the Consumer Council for Water (CCW). OfWat responded by stating it was an economic regulator and had no powers to force TW to carry out a long term solution. It did confirm TW had an obligation to provide emergency supply and that consumers are entitled to compensation for supply interruption. OfWat is responsible for ensuring compliance with those standards relating to supply interruption but only after the consumer has contacted the CCW. OfWat also agreed to write to TW to ask them to inform TPC of its proposed course of action. TW have in consequence now written to the TPC. This letter can be found [here](#).

The CCW responded saying it was an advisory body only with no enforcement powers and in any case could only act if all the individual complaints to TW are grouped into one and TW gives them a single group complaints reference number. Furthermore in our case if they could act at all it would be helping us claim compensation for the interruptions.

Conclusion by TPC and suggested way forward.

It appears there is no legal or regulatory lever to force TW to carry out long term remedial work. TW's only regulatory obligation is to ensure emergency supplies are available when interruptions occur and to pay compensation when the OfWat standards are breached.

Pressure to force long term action by TW will thus need TW to recognise that TPC and residents will create an uncomfortable media / political environment if no action is forthcoming.

The suggestion for discussion at the meeting is that an formal action group under the auspices of the TPC should be formed, which would act with the support of the residents and the TPC. This would be chaired by an informed resident with a parish councillor providing support.

TW response

Thames Water
Customer Relations
PO Box 436
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SN38 1TU

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Email: Customer.Feedback@thameswater.co.uk

31 August 2022

Our Ref: 33493058

Ofwat Ref: OFW-039422

Supply interruptions

Dear Mr Sants,

I'm sorry you've needed to reach out to our regulator Ofwat, regarding the frequent supply interruptions in Turville. I can assure you we've taken the residents of Turville's concerns seriously and our investigations are ongoing.

Ofwat has asked us to contact you directly to address your concerns and having spoken to my colleagues, I trust you will find the below information helpful.

The cause of the frequent supply interruptions

We have identified the root cause of the supply interruptions at Turville to be that of supply and demand. This means there is more demand (draw) on the network than we can deliver, leaving some areas with less water than others. Unfortunately, this year's supply issues were compounded by Stokenchurch Reservoir being out of use during the beginning of August. We've also experienced the driest July since records began, further increasing the domestic draw on the network.

We are carrying out an extensive data gathering operation, to further understand where the draw is coming from and who is affected. To gather this data, we've been installing pressure/flow loggers progressively, from the point of production, towards the areas that we know experience supply issues.

We are aware this issue has been ongoing for some time and it is likely the supply and demand issues described above are responsible for the frequent interruptions since 2018. However, if there is a specific interruption which you would like us to investigate, please let us know.

Works taken to mitigate and prevent further interruptions

Once we are aware of an issue, we have a plan in place to support the water network during a supply interruption in this area. To explain, there are multiple infusion points, which are points in our water network which we use to manually pump water into the network from mobile water tankers. Thereby restoring the water supply to residents, albeit this may be at a lower than normal operating pressure.

At present, our telemetry data does not always indicate when our customers will be affected by the supply and demand issue. This means we need our customers to report it to us every time they are affected. This will help us build more data and understanding and ensure our plan is put into operation as soon as possible.

I've set up an internal bulletin board number (BB): [70052320](#), which residents should quote when making an online or telephone report. Included in this BB are instructions for our contact centre to send an alert to our network team.

It is important to explain that this will not guarantee immediate tankering, as we may need to investigate locally before concluding that the issue is supply and demand. However, the head start that this process will give our operational team will undoubtedly help.

As part of our overall investigation, we are also actively looking for leaks and illegal connections that could account for some of the demand on our network.

Long term solutions

We will review the data as we get it to further understand the supply and demand issue and will formulate a robust solution. Unfortunately, as we are still awaiting the results of our data gathering, it is too soon to confirm what our next steps will be. It is possible this will culminate in a long-term plan which will require capital investment.

Next steps

Once we are able to confirm our plans, we will look to engage with the residents in the area which may include open forum meetings and letter campaigns.

I trust that this offers reassurance, however, if you have any further queries and would like to discuss this, you can call me on [0800 009 3932](#). My working hours are [08:00 – 17:00](#) Mon- Fri. If I'm not available, one of my colleagues will be able to arrange for me to call you back.

Yours sincerely

Leo Lay

CEO Office Manager