

SOUTHERN WATER MEETING – AUGUST 13th 2025

Southern Water (SW) hosted a meeting at the Sovereign Harbour Community Centre in order to explain what has caused the obnoxious smell emanating from their Langney Point Wastewater Treatment Works (Poo Castle) and how they intend to cure it. As expected, it was a fiery meeting with a good turnout of locals estimated at around 120, including our MP, Josh Babarinde OBE and our local councillors. A brief explanation of the problem was given with a lot of interruptions from angry locals. Reference was made to the short notice of the meeting, the restricted advertising and the fact that it was in the afternoon rather than the evening.

SW apologised for the situation and accepted that it should never have reached this point. Josh thanked the SW representatives for attending to 'face the music' but then took them to task, telling them that they have let Eastbourne down and demanding compensation be paid to affected residents. SW made no commitment but acknowledged they expected Josh would continue to pursue this.

The crux of the problem is that the Treatment Works has three 'scrubbing machines' of which two need to be operational at any time. Scrubber number one is working fine but scrubbers two & three are currently out of action. Scrubber number two is expected to be back in service by the end of August but number three needs a major 'operation'. Once number two is back in service, the odour should be reduced, but it doesn't come with any guarantees.

It was asked why various new developments had been approved recently if the Treatment Works didn't have the capacity. SW explained that the capacity to deal with the sewerage was fine until at least 2035 based upon current population forecasts, this was purely a problem with dealing with the hydrogen sulphide odour emanating from the process.

Residents asked why dividends were paid to shareholders rather than investment made into the plant. The SW representative stated that no dividends had been paid since 2017. The large bonuses paid to senior executives were also questioned. It was explained that the targets set across the region had been met (albeit not in Eastbourne!) and therefore the bonuses were payable.

The meeting came to an end with Southern Water promising to hold further meetings to update residents.

Dave Rogers
Chair, SHRA
August 2025