

Jane Haywood  
Chair, Barlborough Parish Council  
By email at: [janehaywood1@btinternet.com](mailto:janehaywood1@btinternet.com)

Our ref: COMP/12949

Date: 29 April 2021

Dear Ms Haywood

**Re: Environment Agency response to pollution in Barlborough, Derbyshire**

Thank you for your email of 14 April 2021 to Ellie McCann and Pete Fox regarding your concerns about water pollution in the pond at Barlborough. We take all complaints very seriously and I am sorry you are not happy with our actions to resolve this matter.

I can confirm that we received 3 reports between 6 and 9 April 2021 of pollution in the pond at Barlborough. We undertook a joint site investigation with representatives from Bolsover and North East Derbyshire District Environmental Health and Yorkshire Water on 23 April 2021, which resulted in the source of pollution being traced to a unit on a nearby industrial estate.

I will address each of your questions in turn:

**1. What immediate action will be taken when a referral is made to the hotline?**

When a call is made to the Environment Agency's 24 hour incidents hotline (0800 807060) about an environmental issue or incident, information is logged as a report on our National Incident Recording System (NIRS) which generates a unique reference number.

Reports of water pollution are passed to an Environment Management Duty Officer in and out of hours. The Duty Officer assesses the environmental risk using the Agency's Common Incident Classification System (CICS) to classify the potential and actual environmental impacts, and the impact on Environment Agency resources, including attendance. Environmental impacts are assessed as follows:

- Category 1 – major, serious, persistent and/or extensive impact or effect on the environment, people and/or property;
- Category 2 – significant impact or effect on the environment, people and/or property;
- Category 3 – minor or minimal impact or effect on the environment, people and/or property;
- Category 4 – substantiated incident with no impact.

**2. How quickly will your officers attend?**

The Environment Agency aims to respond to all serious environmental incidents. Our ability to respond to less serious incidents depends on the resources we have available at the time. We are not resourced to attend all incidents reported to us. We focus our efforts on tackling more serious environmental incidents to ensure that we make the best use of our resources.

We aim to respond to potential major and significant incidents within 2 hours during office hours and within 4 hours out of hours. Non-attendance does not mean we ignore reports and all incident reports that we receive are followed up as appropriate. In some situations this may include non-urgent attendance or site follow up, but this is not always the case.

### **3. What action has the Agency taken when complaints have been made in the past?**

The Environment Agency has taken all previous reports of pollution on Barlborough balancing pond seriously. A number of reports were made between April and June 2020, at the start of the coronavirus pandemic and first national lockdown. Due to the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, we have only been attending incidents which we deem to be having a serious impact on the environment. This is in line with Government guidance around staying at home and reducing the risk of spreading the virus.

We were able to carry out remote investigations, which included:

- Speaking with reporters and members of the public about their reports and concerns.
- Contacting Environment Agency permitted sites and local businesses to discuss pollution prevention measures.
- Investigating the surface water drainage network surrounding Barlborough balancing pond.
- Working with Yorkshire Water (YW) to undertake inspections of the public surface water sewer network to identify possible pathways for pollutants.

### **4. What further investigations can you do now to find the source of the problem?**

Through our investigation into the recent reports of pollution at Barlborough balancing pond we have now identified the source of pollution. By working with our partners at Yorkshire Water (YW) and Bolsover District and NE Derbyshire District Councils, we attended site on 23 April and traced the pollution back to a nearby industrial unit.

The operator at the industrial unit has been made aware of the impacts their business has had on the local environment. We are now working with the operator to remove the source of pollution and prevent any further pollution in the pond.

### **5. When can we expect a solution to the problem?**

We are working with the operator to stop the pollution at source and to carry out remedial work on the impacts on Barlborough balancing pond. With your permission we have provided the operator with your contact details and have suggested that they liaise with you directly regarding their intended course of action for cleaning up the pond.

We will continue to work with the operator and carried out a further site inspection visit on 28 April 2021 to assess compliance with The Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016. Under the 'polluter pays' principle we will seek to recover our costs reasonably incurred in dealing with this pollution incident. We will also consider potential enforcement action in line with our enforcement and sanctions policy.

I hope that this is helpful in answering your questions and explaining how we deal with reports of pollution. However if you remain dissatisfied with our handling of your complaint please refer to our complaints procedure which can be found at: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency/about/complaints-procedure](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency/about/complaints-procedure)

Yours sincerely



**Ian Harrison**  
Land and Water Team Leader – Don and Rother