



I wish to make you aware of serious discharge of waste water in to the Mitchels Wood area in Castlemartyr. This is the location of the Cork County Council owned WWTP PAE2011/115 - operated by EPS. Effluent has been discharged in to the area of the treatment plant itself and the wooded area surrounding the treatment plant which is open to the public and a very popular walking amenity for locals.

This discharge has been ongoing over the bank holiday week-end from Saturday 30th March until Tuesday morning 2nd April. This despite the fact that EPS (under contract from Cork Co Co) claim to visit the plant every day - including weekends. If this were true they could not possibly have neglected to notice the major pollution incident at the plant.

As of 7:55pm this evening (April 2nd 2013) there was a large quantity of waste water filling the drains and dykes surrounding the plant and discharge from a manhole was continuing despite the fact that an employee of EPS told me by telephone at 8pm his colleagues had visited the plant earlier and fixed a blocked pump. Photographs attached are from approximately 9:10am Tuesday morning April 2nd.

This represents a serious environmental and public health hazard and once again illustrates the inability of EPS to properly maintain the plant.

Either EPS staff are not fulfilling their stated intention to visit the site every day (including weekends) or else they are not reporting or addressing the issues that arise. Over the past number of years it has been up to individuals and local groups so as ourselves to inform Cork County council, the EPA and Inland Fisheries Ireland of various malfunctions and pollution incidents. Given that it is essentially public money which is paying the EPS contract it is the responsibility of Cork county council and the EPA to ensure that money is spent wisely and that the terms of the contract with EPS are fulfilled.

I have asked Cork county council to detail the cause of the incident, the times Cork county council were made aware of the situation and who reported the problem and

the details of the first report from EPS to Cork County council to make them aware that there was a problem.

I also requested what action(s) will be undertaken by Cork county council to clean up the area around Castlemartyr WWTP to make it safe for the public and wildlife.

To date all I have been told is that the waste water engineer for Cork county council is looking in to the incident and has confirmed that there were a series of pump blockages at the inlet works to the WWTP.

No effort has been made to clear up the pollution which seeped in to the area surrounding the plant, the waste water was simply let seep into the drain and the soil causing a lingering stench which is even worse than normal from this plant.

They are considering a number of “initiatives” to reduce the potential for this problem to arise. If ever there were misuse of a word it is to use the word “initiative” in relation to this plant, EPS and Cork County council. Everything they have done is in “reaction” to our group reporting incidents as they have arisen.

A worthwhile and meaningful initiative would be to, once and for all, desist from polluting the woodland surrounding their WWTP and the Kiltha river to which it discharges.

I would respectfully suggest that the EPA needs to also be more proactive in enforcing environmental protection legislation in relation to Cork county council’s responsibilities in its ownership of Castlemartyr Waste Water treatment plant.

At the very least the EPA should be upholding its brief, deliberately inherent in its name, to Protect the Environment.

Yours etc.

David Burke

Environmental Officer

Womanagh Angling & Development Association

Castlemartyr

Co. Cork

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Picture taken from outside security fence Castlemartyr WWTP. April 2nd 9:10am



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