

Introduction to the Water Quality Project

Written by Robbie

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Newport is a holiday resort with a vested interest in maintaining the highest standards of bathing water quality on the local beaches. In May 2008 Newport Sands was one of 11 beaches in Pembrokeshire awarded Blue Flag status (and Pembrokeshire has more such beaches than any other local authority in Wales.) However, in May 2009 it was announced that Newport was at risk of losing its Blue Flag, there having been two sample failures of the water collected at the 'so-called' designated bathing site (Newport Beach North). See the following separate article on how the beach water is tested and what the results mean : [Bathing Water Testing](#) . However, subsequently the EAW (Environment Agency Wales) were able to justify applying a so-called exceptional "

wet weather rider

" (due to exceptional greater than 5-year rainfall event) allowing them to re-test one of failed samples, and thereby scrape by a mandatory pass for the year.

We are committed to work to ensure our water quality is improved, by further improvements to our sewage disposal system. This project aims to lobby and work towards a long term solution to the management of Newport sewage wastes. We want to see further measures undertaken in addition to the replacement of the so-called 'long' sea outfall ('

LS
O')

currently proposed by Welsh Water for completion later this year.

Sewage.

In recent years the local corporate statutory water and sewage undertaker, Dwr Cymru / Welsh Water ("**DC/WW**"), has spent a lot of capital funds and made very significant investments in changes to the sewage system in the Town. In particular, a second stage settlement and filtration treatment works has been built above Cwm Rhigian (known to DC/WW as the Ty Canol Farm or Newport Waste Water Treatment Works "**WwTW**"), whilst a duplex continuous pumping station has been built down in Cwm Gwaelod (just above the Old Lifeboat Station) to feed it (called the Cwm Sewage Pumping Station "

Cwm SPS

") and the gravitational town main behind the Parrog Front has been replaced or supplemented (relieved) in different places with a larger (400-600mm int. diameter) new sewer pipe of durable man-made materials.

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Unfortunately, all of this investment has very largely taken place without the benefit of consultation and engagement with those at the grassroots community level, and consequently despite these efforts we continue to suffer with occasional serious sewage problems in the town ; especially at times of ever more frequent and longer heavy rainfall events, when the surface water run-off from streets and rooftops, which is largely not segregated from the sewage, overloads the system's capacity to handle the combined flow.

In particular, despite the upgrade to the town main above the Parrog Front, DC/WW have been unable to hold to their original commitment, and the community's ambition, that the so-called Combined Storm Overflows ('**CSO**' - meaning devices that discharge sewage combined with surface water run off during storm events) in the system would be permanently closed. Whilst, the pumping station down at Cwm, and thus the sewage treatment works is simply by-passed by means of a storm overspill during such times (a total of 20 days last year).

Thankfully DC/WW have now committed to a replacement of the so-called long sea outfall ('LSO') beneath the Cwm, which broke-up in about 2006-7 in way of the tidal median (where subject to action by low tide surf), with a replacement to be completed by March 2011. In the meanwhile, the Group is committed to lobbying the local Environment Agency ('EAW') officials to properly establish what precisely is the effect of untreated storm flow discharges on the bathing water quality samples taken from the Big Beach, which have led to its losing the 'blue flag' status for several years in the recent past, as could have happened again this year.