

Title:	Fumes on Bramley High Street
Description	For several months there has been a smell of diesel or heating fuel in the High Street. The problem is affecting some businesses. A number of issues have now been identified at the Petrol Station which may well be the cause.
Owner:	Waverley BC, Environment Agency
Area:	Environment
Status	Waverley BC and EA Investigation ongoing
Last Updated:	10/05/2023

## Actions

Date	Action by	Action/Event
10/05/2023	Various	Update from Jeremy Hunt
04/05/2023	Various	Update from Jeremy Hunt
24/04/2023	Various	Update from LWA
29/03/2023	Various	Slick seen in Bramley Stream -
23/03/2023	Various	Update from Jeremy Hunt
09/03/2023	Various	Report from Jeremy Hunt
01/03/2023	BVS	Whilst Waverley are investigating, to date no result.
07/02/2023	BVS	Complaint sent to Waverley, and forwarded to BPC.

## Details:

10/05/2023	<p><b>Latest from Jeremy Hunt: Newsletter ...</b> Over the last week or so I have been liaising with Bramley petrol station's senior management team, and they believe the odour to be related to two incidents where a customer's vehicle tank failed on the forecourt (November 2022 and March 2023). It seems possible that it is also linked to issues with the gauge risers in both tanks 2 and 4. Environmental consultants have visited the site and have confirmed that a small amount of fresh fuel was found in two boreholes near the store and exit crossover which could have come from customer fuel tanks. The fuel has since been removed, and the boreholes will be re-checked this week to see if there is any recurrence of the presence of fuel. In the meantime, samples of the fuel have been obtained and sent for analysis to confirm the fuel type, and to estimate how long it's been there. The management have reassured me that the site is currently safe and compliant, and that they are acutely aware of the concerns of the local community, not least the poor Jolly Farmer that is the business most affected. I will keep you updated</p>
04/05/2023	<p><b>Latest from Jeremy Hunt: BRAMLEY UPDATE...</b> As many of you will know, an awful chemical smell has been circulating throughout Bramley for the past few months, and is particularly evident in the Jolly Farmer Pub. Towards the end of March, the strength of the smell increased, and residents noticed a lot of activity and workmen at the local petrol station. I raised the issue once again with Waverley Borough Council, SCC Trading Standards, the EA and the petrol station's senior leadership team.</p>

	<p>As a result of these enquiries and <a href="#">Jane Austin</a>'s hard work as Bramley resident and Waverley Borough candidate, Trading Standards have now confirmed that during precautionary works at the petrol station on one of its tanks (tank 1) to repair the skin lining, and whilst sealing the ducts in the petrol chambers, leaks were identified to the gauge tops for tanks 2 and 4. Trading Standards think this may have been as a result of the pipe and tank pressure test carried out in February. However, the smell was first identified in January, so further investigations are required. Trading Standards have been informed by the petrol station that a contractor was on site on Friday 28th April to rectify the leaking tank gauge/lids and conduct further inspections. I have now sent another letter to the petrol station's senior leadership team for their response to the news of the leaks, and to ascertain the cause, whether any works remain outstanding and if they will share their concluding report with me.</p> <p>Like me, I know you will be relieved that we now have an answer, but also very concerned about the impact these leaks have had on our environment, including our waterways, and not to mention local businesses. Therefore, I have got back in touch with the Chair of the EA to update him, and request that a thorough investigation is commissioned into the extent of the environmental damage caused by these leaks. I have also updated Sarah Bentley, CEO at Thames Water, as Thames Water are actively carrying out remedial works to water pipes in Bramley. I will of course update you further as soon as I know more.</p>
24/04/2023	<p>Latest update from the Linersh Wood Association (Jane Austin)</p> <p>The petrol/ fume smell continues to be very strong in the Jolly Farmer and is affecting trade. It seems to be worse after the water table rises following rain and an oil / fuel type substance is often present in the river. We have had the Environment Agency and Waverley investigating this issue for months, so far to no avail. However, I learned that last Sunday the Co-op petrol station had fuel tanks re-lined as they were apparently faulty. We are now working on the hypothesis that fuel may have escaped over a period of time. This is just a theory for now - a testing device has been placed in the Jolly Farmer which should answer this question definitively and we are urgently following this up with the EA, Trading Standards and Co-op. I hope this finally gets to the bottom of it and I will be working hard to push for answers on this.</p>
30/03/2023 – Message from Jeremy Hunt MP	<p><b>BRAMLEY SAGA CONTINUES</b> Last Friday, local volunteers noticed the awful smell had returned, and led them to the river. Very worryingly, some sort of chemical film was seen on the surface of the water - so a huge well done to local campaigner Jane Austin, along with local residents Charlotte and Claire, for obtaining a sample and reporting the incident to the Environment Agency (EA). I have raised this directly with Alan Lovell, Chair at the EA, and asked him to facilitate the collection and testing of the sample. Alan has since informed me that his staff attended the site on Saturday to assess the stream. They confirmed that very small amounts of oil were visible, but that there was no evidence of</p>

	<p>significant, ongoing contamination. Given the heavy rainfall on Friday (the smell is always worse after a downpour), Alan thinks the oil resulted from urban surface water drainage, but the EA did collect more samples yesterday morning. I will of course keep you posted, but in the meantime, if there are any further incidents, please report them directly to the EA hotline on 0800 807060.</p>
29/03/2023	<p><b>Facebook posting by Jane Austin (<a href="#">Facebook Posting</a>)</b>  <b>BRAMLEY SMELL</b>  Once again yesterday following rain the smell of fumes was awful. Some of our intrepid Bramley ladies went to investigate and we found this - some kind of fuel or solvent clearly visible in our stream and it absolutely stank. We have informed the EA (thanks Claire Davis), Waverley Borough Council and our MP <a href="#">Jeremy Hunt</a>.  <a href="#">Charlotte Ivory</a> got her water PH testing kit out and I also have a water sample to give the EA to test.  We need to get to the bottom of this asap! We will keep you posted.</p>
23/03/2023 – Message from Jeremy Hunt MP	<p><b>BRAMLEY ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES:</b> Talking of which there are still odour issues in Bramley. It’s reassuring to hear that last week all fuel tank chambers at the filling station were clear, and no fuel smell was detected. The interceptor separator was inspected and cleaned and water levels were normal. The last 12 months of wet stock reconciliation records have also been reviewed, and reassuringly confirm that there are no variances that would indicate loss of product. I also got back in touch with the Environment Agency who carried out a further site visit on 10th March to assess the local watercourse. They too confirmed that there remains no evidence of any fuel/oil contamination. An EA officer also re-visited the public house last week, and as soon as I receive the report from this visit, I will let you know. In the meantime, I have requested more regular updates from WBC. Thames Water engineers have also been working both upstream and downstream from the pumping station to understand exactly why we’re seeing high flows in the network. More on which next week.</p>
09/03/2023 – Message from Jeremy Hunt MP	<p><b>BRAMLEY SMELL ISSUE</b> - Following my email to them, Thames Water have confirmed that there is no link between the worrying odour and the pump issues at Gosden Common. However, they did observe an obvious smell by the Post Office and under a nearby gully. As you know, SCC Trading Standards undertook a pressure test at the service station on 22/02 - I have now received a copy of the report, and all seems in order. However, they have said that the onsite petrol interceptor separator was last emptied on 26/10/22, and the frequency of the clearance of the interceptor should be at least every 6 months/determined by site conditions. A job report has been submitted by the service station for these works to be carried out as a precaution, and once completed, Trading Standards will let me know. As things stand, Waverley has said that there is little else they can do with regards to linking the smell to the petrol station.</p> <p>However, this morning I was alerted to the fact that the fire service had closed and cordoned off the petrol station, as worryingly, fuel was seen running down Station Road. At this stage we don’t know whether this incident is linked to the ongoing smell, but regardless, the situation in Bramley requires urgent action</p>

	<p>and the root cause of the issue needs to be identified as soon as possible. Residents are understandably worried about their health - some are having to use fans to disperse the smell, and local businesses are experiencing drastically reduced footfall. Therefore, I have contacted Tom Horwood (CEO at Waverley), Alan Lovell (Chair at the Environment Agency) and SCC Trading Standards requesting that specialists attend the site today for more in-depth investigation, including re-checking the watercourse for fuel contamination (there are no water abstraction points in the vicinity). We must get to the bottom of this!</p>
<p>08/02/2023 Email received from Waverley</p>	<p>Dear residents,</p> <p>You have all recently made complaints to the Council concerning a malodour in the vicinity of Bramley High Street and it is likened to the smell of petrol or diesel fuel.</p> <p>The Council has been investigating this matter and I would like to update you as follows:-</p> <p>Due to the smell, the investigation has started with the Co op petrol station as a possible source. There is a report of a spill in December last year but unfortunately the station has a new Manager, who is unable to confirm this or provide us with details. The paperwork has been called for from the Company to examine what happened at that time and if this spill could have contributed to the odour. The Petroleum Officer may contact you as part of his investigation.</p> <p>The Petroleum Officer has visited and he will be taking measurements/analytical readings this week using specialist equipment to try and confirm the source of the odour and ensure that there are no safety risks here.</p> <p>He has already confirmed visually that the tanks and pipes are not leaking but he has required a pressure test to see if there is any leakage of any kind to their system.</p> <p>It has also been confirmed that the Open reach workers were first to complain about the smell, which they noticed in the underground chambers and pipes. I understand that they subsequently washed down the tunnels and chambers and have now finished their work and left the site.</p> <p>We hope to send you a further update after the tests are completed.</p> <p>Best regards,</p> <p>James McGowan Environmental Health Officer Working days Monday – Wednesday 01483 523222 Council Offices, The Burys, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1HR <a href="http://www.waverley.gov.uk">www.waverley.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>07/02/2023 Email send by BVS</p>	<p><b>From:</b> <a href="mailto:bramleyvillagesociety@gmail.com">bramleyvillagesociety@gmail.com</a> &lt;<a href="mailto:bramleyvillagesociety@gmail.com">bramleyvillagesociety@gmail.com</a>&gt; <b>Sent:</b> 07 February 2023 11:27 <b>To:</b> <a href="mailto:environmentalhealth@waverley.gov.uk">environmentalhealth@waverley.gov.uk</a></p>

**Cc:** [ENQUIRIES@JOLLYFARMER.CO.UK](mailto:ENQUIRIES@JOLLYFARMER.CO.UK)

**Subject:** Diesel Fumes in Bramley

Hi, For the last week or more, there has been a smell of diesel in the Bramley High Street. I believe this was originally reported by Openreach when their engineers were trying to work in the BT ducts on the High Street by Holy Trinity Church. On visiting the Jolly Farmer Pub last Saturday, the smell in the pub was to say the least unpleasant, and apparently far worse in the pub cellars. The landlord said he has tried to report the issue but has had no success in finding someone to take action so far. A number of customers have had to leave the pub as they were unable to cope with the fumes, so the pub is losing business. The smell is also evident further down the High Street opposite Windrush Close.

Whilst currently unproven, the most likely source of the diesel leak is the Coop Service Station at the junction of the A281 and Station Road. The Service station manager has denied any responsibility.

The DOE state that:

*Councils must look into complaints about smells from industrial, trade and business premises that could be a 'statutory nuisance' (covered by the [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#)).*

*For the smell to count as a statutory nuisance it must do one of the following:*

- *unreasonably and substantially interfere with the use or enjoyment of a home or other premises*
- *injure health or be likely to injure health*

Given that the diesel fumes are interfering with the Jolly Farmer's business and that according to National Health England "*breathing in diesel fumes may cause dizziness, drowsiness headaches; breathing in large amounts can result in coma, loss of muscle control, heart and lung problems*", please would you advise on what action is being taken to urgently correct the problem.

Regards

Joe O'Connell  
Bramley Village Society  
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