

Peterchurch Water Supply Society - Chair Report 2023

Thank you all for attending and/or showing an interest in Peterchurch Water Supply Society. It has not been an easy year for the Water Society. After the last AGM in February 2022, we had a clear mandate and vision for the future. Post Covid, and with estimates and research complete, we were ready to use the spring/summer/autumn of 2022 to start work. Our contractor, however, had major medical issues. A hip replacement was required and with massive NHS waiting lists it seemed this would not be until late September that any work could commence. Even then, this was dependent on a good medical outcome and the NHS keeping to schedule. Presently there is a backlog of around seven million patients awaiting procedures.

Therefore, after some debate, the Committee decided to seek another contractor to undertake the programme. Obviously, this entailed more research and preparation. This work has now started some time ago and various operations are complete or near completion. These include the installation of an automated chlorination mechanism and the routing of a new pipeline to link with the Hinton gravity system. Pipework to connect the new reservoir tank into the system is in hand. More technical detail will follow and be presented. It goes without saying that there has been a massive increase in the price of materials.

At the last AGM the various principles were presented and approved by the Members. Much of this remains in place. We had hoped to make the Upper Reservoir entirely redundant. This was partly because of concerns about water quality but also for a number of other technical reasons. At the time it seemed a neat solution was to uniquely use the St. Peter's Well supply. Since then events have seen the result of climate change, both worldwide and specific to the Golden Valley. I am writing this at the beginning of July 2023, June has been the hottest ever recorded. People used more water nationally during this period with demand increasing by 25%. Water UK issued these figures. Wildlife UK commented: "Every month seems to be the hottest, the driest, the wettest or whichever record breaking event it is". The Committee feels the uncertainty this generates, makes the dependence on one single supply unwise. Although the Upper Reservoir has problems, it is an additional supply in times of significant need. It is also, effectively, a 'header tank' to possibly use in order to maintain a gravity feed to Hinton. We simply do not know what may prevail over the next decades and strongly feel we must ensure our village water supply be protected and maintained.

Having said that in a recent meeting with the landowner it was made clear that PWSS were not welcome on the Upper Reservoir site. Access by vehicle, already denied in writing, was reinforced, as was any development in terms of modifications or improvement. Further to this, the fence erected around the reservoir catchment area is being removed by the land owner sometime after 28th October 2023. All of this will make the supply from this source no longer viable for human consumption. We therefore propose keeping the Upper Reservoir presently, but its use will cease shortly. In the longer term we would hope to decommission it but must look to evidence of the single supply being adequate before doing so.

I would like to place on record my thanks to the PWSS Committee for all their hard work since the last AGM. Without this volunteer input the Water Society could not continue to function. We have had Committee members sadly leave us. Notable amongst these was Eva Morgan, who has served, as the voice of reason, for many years. Happily Eva still supports and takes an interest in PWSS. Fran Milligan and John Fishenden also both left, both after extended and active service. Our grateful thanks to them. Happily, Greg Warwick, Fran`s partner, has joined the team and been most valuable.. Our Secretary, Jody Bristoll, also resigned after completing an excellent job for some considerable time. Jody`s mother, Carole has joined us on the Committee and is most welcome. We have, however, after extensive efforts, been unable to secure a new Secretary and this has been a serious hindrance to progress and administration. If we cannot enlist volunteers to run the Water Supply it will cease to exist.

My grateful thanks, then, to the Committee for their help and support. Whilst it`s unhelpful to single people out, it cannot go without mention that Sarah Seabourne and Chris Richardson have been diligent and highly industrious in the pursuit of the modernisation programme. Their technical knowledge and intelligence have proved invaluable. We must mention our Treasurer, Hannah Price, who, in the very last stages of pregnancy was working to finalise our accounts. Ian McCullough has continued to turn out every day, sometimes several times, in all weathers to maintain the supply. Something he has done unobserved for over two decades. Thank you all and everyone who has supported us.