



Date: 3 May 2024

Dear Stakeholder,

Lavant Stakeholder Update

Many of you have contacted me recently asking for updates to the work we are carrying out, tackling groundwater in East Dean, Charlton and the wider Lavant Valley.

Below is, what I hope you will find, a useful update on the work carried out so far, and what we have planned in the coming months:

1. Update on our operations in the Lavant Valley

As the groundwater level increased and began infiltrating and overwhelming the sewer system earlier this year, we introduced mitigation measures; tankering and “over pumping” to remove excess water and diluted waste, to reduce the problems at the Village Green in East Dean. After some much-needed dry weather, groundwater levels have dropped sufficiently enough that we have now completely removed these mitigation measures.

I'd like to thank you all for your patience and understanding during this time.

2. Our plans for the upcoming months

We are committed to improving our services and ensuring the efficiency of our sewer systems to enhance the quality of life in the area. I want to share our plan with you, which is aimed at reducing the excess water in our sewer system which, in turn, benefits the entire community.

Community Engagement

I want to hold a community drop-in session at the village hall in East Dean during May 2024 (date tbc.) Here you can see a demonstration of the innovative lining technique we'll be using to enhance our sewer systems' efficiency.

Detailed Investigations

From May to September 2024, we will conduct thorough surveys and investigations throughout the catchment area. Our goal is to see where we can mitigate groundwater and surface water issues, ensuring a sustainable solution for the community.

Stay Informed

To keep you updated, we're organising letter drops across the area, and increasing our social media activity from May to June 2024 to highlight the groundwater works. I encourage all of you to engage with us, sharing feedback and asking questions.

Phase 1 Public Sewer & Manhole Sealing

Main Road, Charlton Road, and Chapel Road are our priority areas. Sealing works will take place from July to September 2024, provided the groundwater has reduced sufficiently to enable work to be carried out safely.

During the same period, we also want to work on private sewers and manholes in East Dean Village. Again, this is dependent on groundwater conditions, and we will also need customers' permission.

Surface Water Management

We are looking at more innovative, sustainable methods to remove or significantly reduce surface water, such as downpipe planters for large roof areas. This work will take place from July to September 2024.

Ongoing and Future Surveys

Further surveys from September to December this year as we plan Phase 2 of our improvement strategy.

Continuous Monitoring

Starting in July 2024, we will begin an ongoing monitoring programme, installing instruments within the sewer system to ensure efficacy and prompt intervention when necessary.

Looking Ahead - Phase 2 Improvements

Scheduled for May 2025, Phase 2 will see us building on the learnings from the initial phase, introducing a greater number of sustainable enhancements throughout the catchment.

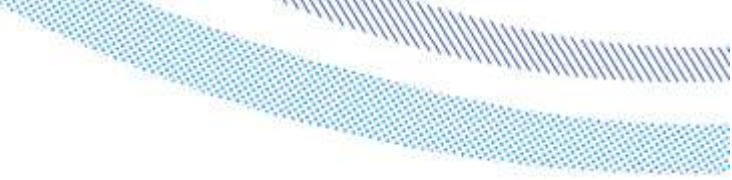
Your Role and Participation

Your feedback and participation are vital to the success of our plans. I invite all of you to join us at our upcoming events, comment on our updates, and contribute your insights to help shape a resilient and effective sewer system for the Lavant Valley.

3. Works in the area

The Lavant area contains approximately 24 kilometres of public sewers, with an additional 15 kilometres of privately-owned infrastructure.

We have used a combination of traditional CCTV technology and new Electroscan equipment to survey the system. Unlike traditional CCTV methods, this technology can detect leaking joints,



which may not be visibly apparent with other survey techniques. This advanced approach has been instrumental in identifying areas requiring immediate attention, and we are acting on this information.

To date, we have successfully sealed 52 manholes and fixed leaks over 6.4 kilometres of sewer lines using leak-tight liners, significantly enhancing the system's efficiency and reliability. The cost of these essential repairs has been approximately £2 million.

We have 1 kilometre of public sewer and 12 manholes still to be lined. We will complete this once the groundwater levels have reduced enough to allow for safe and effective operations. We are optimistic that this phase will be completed by August 2024.

4. Over-pumping and tankering

I recognise that tankering and over-pumping operations are inconvenient and disruptive and am sorry for the impact this has caused to residents. These mitigation measures have been unavoidable during the extreme weather this past winter, to protect homes.

I also recognise this is a beautiful and tranquil environment and want to assure you that we are fully committed to rectifying any damage to verges or grassed areas resulting from our activities. As our emergency measures have now been withdrawn, we will undertake a thorough review to ensure that all affected areas are restored.

I am also aware of the noise concerns raised by residents. We deployed extensive acoustic barriers on-site to mitigate noise impact but acknowledge this is never a complete solution to the problem and there is always room for improvement. We will revisit our noise reduction policies, focusing particularly on minimising disruptions caused by tanker beacons and operations during nighttime. Safety must remain the top priority, but we will strive to balance this with the community's need for peace and quiet, especially outside standard operational hours.

Please remember that we do everything in our power to avoid over-pumping. We will only resort to using it in extreme conditions, to prevent the risk of flooding and loss of essential facilities for our customers. The recent record levels of wet weather presented challenges that our standard tanker operations could not fully meet – and that is why we were forced to introduce over-pumping. While unpleasant, this did allow us to screen and remove harmful solids from the waste more effectively, offering an alternative that was preferable to potentially uncontrolled discharges.

We are also enhancing our environmental protection measures at the site by introducing an ultra-violet disinfection unit. This additional equipment will significantly diminish bacteria levels in the discharged effluent, minimising health and environmental risk.

Please be assured, the measures we took were with the intent of minimising the risk of flooding and the distress it causes homeowners. We are dedicated to resolving all issues promptly and efficiently and will always stop over-pumping and tankering operations as soon as it is feasible and safe to do so.

5. Infiltration reduction

The Lavant Valley area has, in past winters, faced significant challenges due to groundwater infiltration into our sewer systems, overloading the system and causing sewage spills. Historically, this has led to issues ranging from internal flooding to restricted toilet use for our customers.

We therefore don't just want to manage the situation, as the status quo is unacceptable; we want to proactively address the root causes of groundwater infiltration in the area. We're continuing a comprehensive programme of investigation, repair, and ongoing maintenance to strengthen the resilience of our sewer infrastructure.

Our plan does include the use of temporary mitigation measures, such as tankering and over-pumping. As I've mentioned, while these methods provide interim relief from the risk to homes, they are not a long-term solution. We have therefore significantly increased our investment in major infrastructure improvements to enhance the integrity of sewers and manholes in and around the Lavant Valley. This includes re-lining sewers to prevent groundwater forcing its way in causing the consequences recently witnessed. Clearly, this improvement work cannot take place in overloaded sewers, so is dependent on drier weather conditions expected this summer.

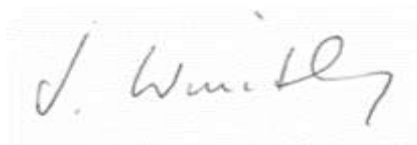
Significant, essential improvements for residents in this area align fully with our aim to provide resilient water and wastewater services that meet the needs of our communities, while also protecting our natural environment.

I know the mitigation measures we have been using; the over pumping and tankering, have had an adverse impact on you and other residents in the area. I can't stress enough how sorry I am for the length of time you have been inconvenienced by these measures. I assure you however, that they have been absolutely necessary measures to take in preventing flooding to homes and causing wider environment issues.

Thank you so much for your continued patience as we work to provide these more permanent measures in reducing the impacts of groundwater on our wastewater network.

As we move forward, I remain committed to keeping you informed of our ongoing work and the benefits these improvements will bring to the Lavant Valley. Your feedback is invaluable to us as we strive to enhance our services. If you have any specific questions regarding this, or any other matters related to Southern Water, please contact our Stakeholder Engagement Team at stakeholderteam@southernwater.co.uk

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Winstanley', is written over a light grey grid background.

Jude Winstanley
Managing Director - Wastewater