

Date: 6 February 2013
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Dear

Last Wednesday we met with a number of residents who have concerns about the chalk mine treatment works currently underway. Following the meeting we agreed it would be a good idea to write to you to clarify some of the issues we discussed.

The residents we met had concerns about the following:

- The insurance cover for damage caused by the works
- The reinstatement of the interiors of their houses if any works took place within properties
- The need for properties to be empty during the works and the difficulties caused by this.

With regards to insurance cover we have been clarifying the situation with our contractors BAM Ritchies and we can confirm that any damage caused in connection with the works will be covered by the contractor's insurance. Of course this does not cover any other kinds of damage that there might be, such as damage which is not related to the work being carried out or any existing problems. Nobody wants any damage to be caused and we have put in place measures to minimise the risk of this. As you know Hyder have also been completing surveys of properties so that there will be a record of their existing condition and you will be receiving a copy of this record before any work to your property starts. Hyder will also be completing a further survey after the treatment works. If you have any concerns about possible damage during the works please speak directly to BAM Ritchies, or to me if you prefer, as soon as possible.



As far as possible we are trying to avoid the need to enter properties. The contractor plans to complete the treatment work from outside buildings but it is likely that they will need to go into some houses to carry out probing to prove that there is not any untreated ground beneath buildings. Again, if at all possible, they will try to avoid doing this and they are investigating the use of equipment that might allow them to probe from outside buildings. Where they do need to go inside properties they will discuss with you the best location for carrying out any probing which will minimise any damage to your property (for example by avoiding expensive floors which cannot be repaired). They will be using a small rig which is designed to work inside buildings, suitably protecting the area they are working in and will repair around the small area of the probing. Ideally they will try to find locations (for example hidden by carpet) that can be easily patched up when finished. The key to this is that BAM Ritchies will be having discussions with you to try to make sure you are happy with what they are proposing. However I hope you understand that if we decide that probing is required this is because it is the only way to make absolutely sure that we have dealt with the mines beneath your property.

For your safety we have advised that you will probably need to be away from your property for a maximum of two weeks if the mine workings are close to or beneath your house. If it does prove necessary, this period is the maximum we expect you to be away from the property; we will do our best to make sure that it is less than this if at all possible. In addition, during the works we will be constantly reviewing the condition of the mine workings as they are treated. If the contractors feel that it is safe for you to be in your house during the evenings, they will let you know as soon as possible. We know how disruptive this will be for you and the decision to empty properties during the treatment works is not taken lightly.

Whilst for the time being we are confident that the mine workings are safe enough for you to be living in your house, we know from experience of other similar chalk workings that there is a small risk that drilling and treatment works could cause damage to properties, and an even smaller risk that anyone within those properties could be injured if damage happens. Whilst these risks are small, obviously they are not ones we want to take where they concern your safety. We have spoken with all affected residents about this and we know that some people will find it easier to arrange for places to stay during this period than others. If you are having difficulties finding suitable accommodation we will try our best to help with alternatives, bearing in mind that unfortunately the government grant we obtained for these works did not cover accommodation costs. Please be assured that we will work with you as best we can to minimise the time you are away from your property and to help you wherever we can to reduce the disruption.

BAM Ritchies will be setting up their public relations office this week and will be best placed to explain how they will deal with any issues that you have and give you updates on the programme. They also will be contacting you individually to talk about when they will be doing the work, dates when you might need to be out of your property and addressing any concerns you have. I know that BAM Ritchies' site agent Andy Morris will be pleased to talk to you direct if you have any issues on 07775 544 374. You can always contact me on the above number, or David Lawrence from Hyder if you prefer on 07793 369178.

I hope this letter reassures you about some of the concerns you may have. We are doing our very best to get the treatment works completed as soon as possible with as little disruption to you as we possibly can. Thank you again for your patience and support during this difficult time for you all.

Yours sincerely

Shane Flynn
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